NEWS / A2

Survey: 56% of Pinoys want to revive impeach complaint against GMA

MOTORING / B8

3,780 reasons to turn slumping auto parts industry around

WORLD/ A20

Israel ignores calls for ceasefire; expands ground offensive

BUSINESS / B1

Globe profits up 37% to P5.8B in first 6 months of 2006

Ailing Castro turns over power after 47-year rule

HAVANA—FIDEL CASTRO'S ANNOUNCEMENT that he was "provisionally" ceding presidential powers to his brother Raul ushered in a period of uncertainty at home and celebrations by his enemies abroad, while fueling speculation on just how sick he is.

The announcement that Castro had been operated on to repair a "sharp intestinal crisis with

AILING/ A6

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER
BALANCED NEWS, FEARLESS VIEWS
Wednesday, August 2, 2006 ★★ 4 sections / Vol. 21 / No. 235 P18 website: www.inq7.net

GMA defies docs' orders, sneaks out of Palace

By Gil Cabacungan Jr.

PRESIDENT MACAPAGAL-Arroyo has cheated—on her doctors.

Still recovering from a bout with the flu, she defied her doctors' orders to lay off nighttime appointments

GMA/ A8

WALANG SISIHAN PAG NABINAT KA!

Finally, money for OFWs

Palace sends $150,000, says griping envoy was 'correct' after all

By Gil C. Cabacungan Jr.

MALACAÑANG YESterday finally admitted that Ambassador Al Francis Bichara was "technically correct" in complaining that his embassy had not yet received fresh funds from Manila for the evacuation of Filipinos from Lebanon.

Foreign Undersecretary Esteban Conejos Jr. said that Bichara had only received on Monday, or four days late, the $150,000 the Department of Foreign Affairs had committed to send to Lebanon on July 27.

But Conejos stressed that Bichara should have not made a big fuss about it because he knew the money was on its way and that the delay in its delivery was inevitable because banks were closed on Fridays and Saturdays in the Middle East.

Conejos said the government had no choice but to hand-carry the $150,000 cash via Amman, Jordan, and Damascus, Syria, because banks in Beirut, Lebanon, had limited their dollar withdrawals to $25,000 per account.

"He (Bichara) was aware the money was coming. Technically, he might be right but then he knew in good faith that it was already on its way to Damascus," said Conejos.

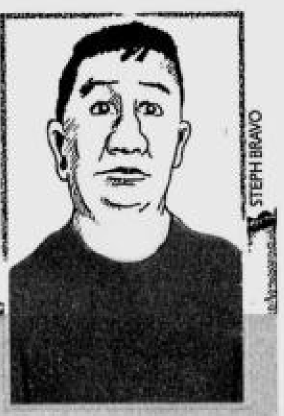
Conejos said Bichara had requested on July 25 only $50,000 to replenish his embassy's funds that have been running low due to the stream of Filipinos seeking temporary shelter for their evacuation.

The DFA sent Undersecretary Raphael Seguis to Beirut to personally check on the Philippine Embassy's cash position which

FINALLY/ A9

KEEPING AN EYE (below) on the movements of Filipino journalists once they are inside the 3-story San Pedro, California, detention facility is Supervisory Immigration Enforcement Agent Clifton Anderson. (At right) Artist's sketch of Bolante's "new look" complete with navy blue overalls. (Far right) Prisoners deemed of the same category are housed in one big room called PODS.

Photos by Nick Sagmit/
Correspondent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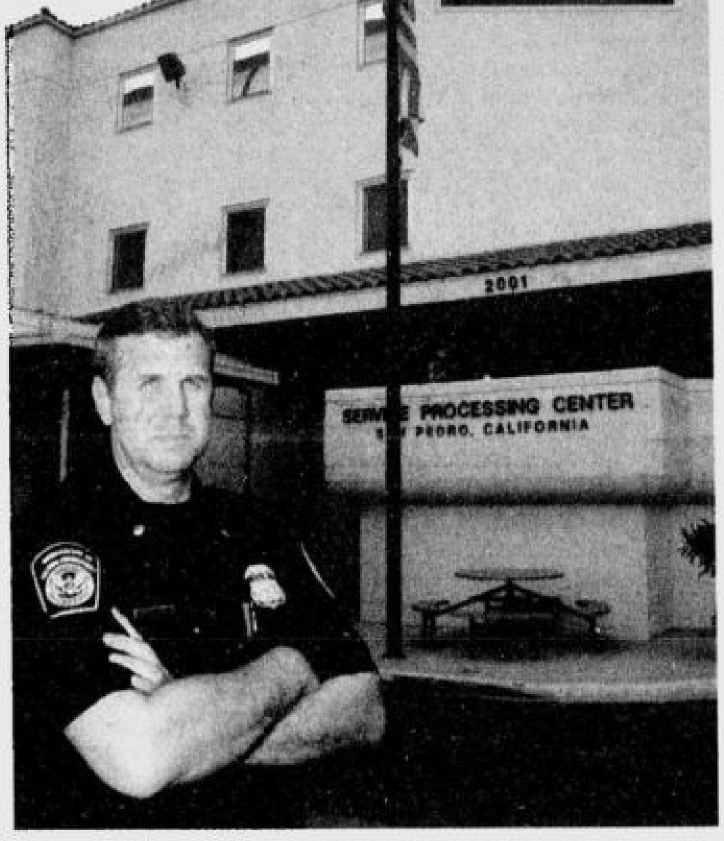

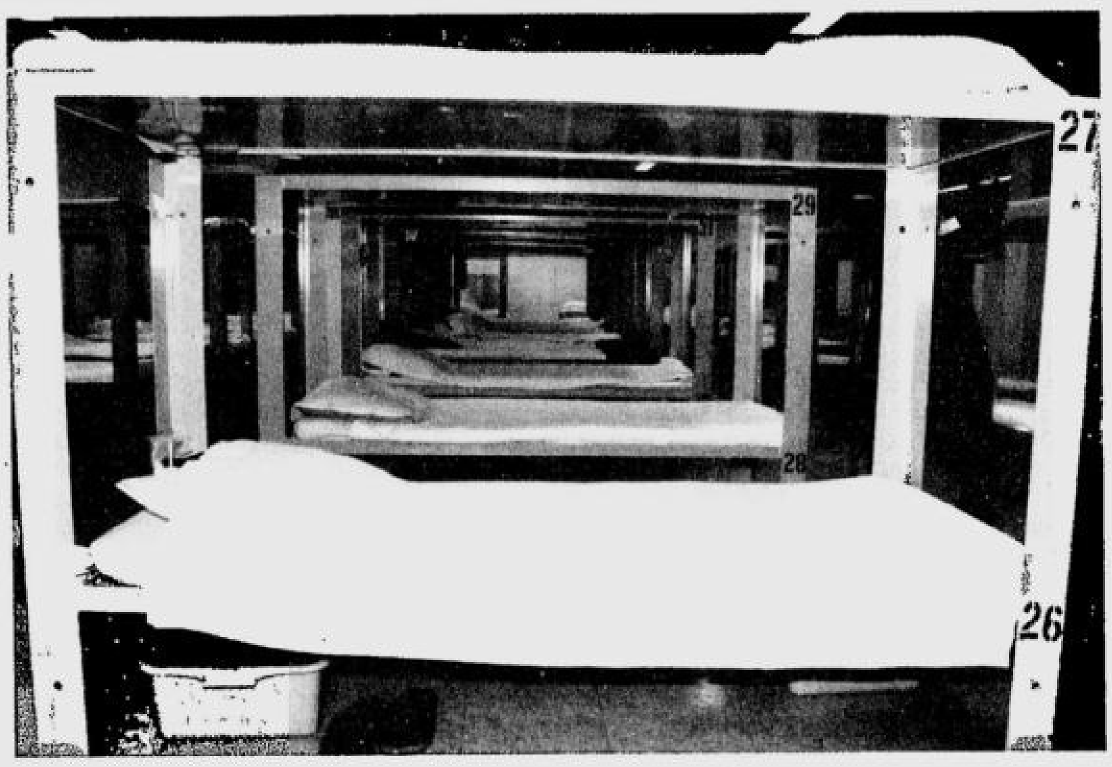

RP media get first glimpse of Bolante in detention center

By Nimfa U. Rueda
Correspondent

LOS ANGELES—LOOKING SULLEN IN A NAVY blue prison jumpsuit, ex-Agriculture Undersecretary Jocelyn "Joc-joc" Bolante yesterday stood before a federal immigration judge in a courtroom inside the San Pedro Detention Center, where he has been detained for over three weeks.

Standing next to him was his lawyer, Christian Schmidt, from the law offices of Azulay, Horn & Seiden, LLC, the largest immigration law firm in Chicago and the fourth largest in the United States.

But at the first scheduled hearing on the removal case against Bolante—widely believed to be the chief architect of the P728-million fertilizer

RP MEDIA/ A15

Senate summons 6 GMA execs, threatens arrest

By TJ Burgonio
and Juliet Labog-Javellana

THE SENATE IS SENDING OUT subpoenas to six officials who snubbed Monday's inquiry into the Arroyo administration's preparedness in evacuating Filipinos from war-torn Lebanon in an attempt to compel them to appear in a hearing next week.

"I'm hoping that they respect the Senate as an institution. If they don't respect me, they should respect the Senate," said Sen. Jinggoy Estrada, chair of the investigating labor committee.

The subpoenas, signed by Senate President Manuel Villar Jr., would be sent to Labor Secretary Arturo Brion, Budget Secretary Rolando Andaya Jr., Foreign Undersecretary Esteban Conejos Jr., Overseas Workers Welfare Administrator Marianito Roque, Philippine Overseas Employment Administrator Rosalinda Baldoz and Undersecretary Ricardo Blancaflor.

Estrada, who opened the inquiry based on a resolution filed by Sen. Richard Gordon, warned these officials they would be arrested if they defy the subpoenas and snub the next public hearing set for Monday.

"The next step the Senate can do is to issue a warrant of arrest.

SENATE/ A8

Caparas life story stranger than fiction

By Nini Valera

POVERTY INSPIRED HIM TO write and discover the power of the Filipino language.

In about 800 *komiks* novels, Carlo J. Caparas explored the darkest and brightest moments of the Filipino soul. He celebrated the triumphs of the man on the street, his disappointments and his frustrations.

Yesterday, Caparas was celebrated as a champion of the Filipino language.

The National Commission for Culture and the Arts bestowed on him the Gawad ng Komisyon sa Wika, a recognition traditionally given to members of the academe and literary figures like Nick Joaquin and F. Sionil Jose.

The award was in recognition of Caparas' contributions to the Filipino language in *komiks* and the movies, according to Prof. Ricardo Ma. D. Nolasco, chair of the National Commission for the Filipino Language.

"Ang komiks ay isa sa mina-

CAPARAS/ A6

RODEL ROTONI

CARLO J. CAPARAS: 800 "komiks" novels, 200 made into movies, champion the masses, Filipino language.

POLITICAL ACTIVISTS' KILLINGS

GMA: Solve 10 cases, jail suspects in 10 weeks

By Christine O. Avendaño

AFTER 244 CASES OF POLITICAL killings and 47 murders of members of media, President Macapagal-Arroyo yesterday finally gave law enforcers a fixed deadline to produce results.

Ms Arroyo said she wanted suspects in at least 10 of the killings jailed within 10 weeks.

It was the first time that the President had set a definite deadline for authorities to solve the unabated murders of leftist militants and journalists that had prompted accusations the killings were part of state policy. *(See story on this page.)*

"I am giving a 10-week deadline for the Department of Justice and the Philippine National Police to jail suspects in at least 10

GMA/ A15

UP prof: Killings could be nat'l security policy

By Luige A. del Puerto

THE UNABATED KILLINGS OF POLITICAL ACTIVISTS could be part of state policy known only to a few and possibly sanctioned by the leadership through its sheer inaction or even complicity, an academician said.

The targeting of leftists for killing may have begun in 2004, peace advocate and University of the Philippines political science Prof. Miriam Coronel Ferrer said in a statement e-mailed to the INQUIRER.

Ferrer teaches the history of Southeast Asia and is a convenor of a group advocating the observance of international human rights by armed combatants in the Philippines.

The INQUIRER sought out Ferrer's views recently in connection with an article on how Southeast Asian nations are dealing with communist insurgencies. Contacted again yesterday, Ferrer confirmed she was still holding to her views.

Among her views was that the political murders ap-

UP PROF/ A15

HIP, HIP, HOORAY!
All Stars Hip Hop of the Philippines finished first in the adult category of the 5th World Hip Hop championship in Redondo Beach, California, on Monday, besting other groups from a dozen countries. The competition is part of an international program to use hip hop dance to get children of low-income families off the streets. AFP

WEATHER FORECAST

FORECAST: The western sections of Central and Southern Luzon and Western Visayas will experience occasional monsoon rains. The rest of Luzon and Visayas will have mostly cloudy skies with scattered rainshowers and thunderstorms while Mindanao will be partly cloudy with isolated rainshowers or thunderstorms.

COMPILED BY KATE V PEDROSO, PDI RESEARCH/08/01/06 SOURCE PAGASA

Second FRONTPAGE

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Metro Manila	Cloudy with Rains	Iloilo/Bacolod	Cloudy with Rains
Baguio	Cloudy with Rains	Roxas	Cloudy with Rains
Tuguegarao	Cloudy with Rains	Cebu	Cloudy with Rains
Laoag	Cloudy with Rains	Tacloban	Cloudy with Rains
Clark Zone	Cloudy with Rains	Gen. Santos	Partly Cloudy
Tagaytay	Cloudy with Rains	Zamboanga	Partly Cloudy
Legazpi	Cloudy with Rains	Cagayan de Oro	Partly Cloudy
Calapan	Cloudy with Rains	Davao	Partly Cloudy

56% of Pinoys want impeach raps revived

A LITTLE OVER HALF, OR 56 PERCENT, OF Filipino adults believe the impeachment complaint against President Macapagal-Arroyo should be reactivated, according to the latest Pulse Asia survey.

The sentiment is shared by considerable majorities across the country and all socio-economic classes, except in the Visayas, where only 36 percent believe that the impeachment complaint should be pursued.

The opinion is most prevalent in Metro Manila (68 percent) and in classes ABC (63 percent).

Meanwhile, the remaining 43 percent of those surveyed believe the impeachment complaint should not be revived, said the "Ulat ng Bayan" survey which was conducted June 24-July 8.

The survey was conducted against the background of another impeachment complaint being filed against the President in the House of Representatives.

Following the junking of the first impeachment complaint in September 2005, majority of Filipinos (53 percent) surveyed in October 2005 said the complaint against the President should have been discussed more thoroughly by the committee on justice, and that the complainants should have been allowed to present evidence before the decision to junk the complaint was made.

In the current survey, 61 percent believe the impeachment complaint should be revived because there is need to ascertain the truth regarding the accusations against the President. It was the reason most often cited across geographic areas and social classes.

Of those who believe that the impeachment complaint was not worth pursuing, 34 percent argued that the issue was already settled last year and that discussing it in Congress would be a waste of time.

Pulse Asia conducted face-to-face interviews of 1,200 representative adults 18 years old and above nationwide. The survey, which the poll organization conducts on its own without any sponsors, had an error margin of plus or. minus 3 percent and a confidence level of 95 percent.

Meanwhile, a recent survey by the Social Weather Stations conducted from June 22 to June 28 found that majority, or 67 percent, of Filipinos would vote "No" to Charter change, should a plebiscite be held today.

The "No" vote led in all areas, the survey showed, with 83 percent in Metro Manila, 64 percent in the rest of Luzon, 60 percent in the Visayas and 68 percent in Mindanao saying they would vote "No" in a plebiscite for a new Constitution described in the survey questions as "what the President wants." *Kate V. Pedroso, PDI Research*

SWORN IN: New Education Sec. Jesli Lapus takes his oath of office before President Macapagal-Arroyo during yesterday's Cabinet meeting. PHOTO BY LYN RILLON

DepEd to train school principals

By Alcuin Papa

THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION will train school principals in the art of management to better improve the administration of schools.

Education Sec. Jesli Lapus, who was sworn in yesterday by President Macapagal-Arroyo in Malacañang, said that well-managed schools have a big impact on students and on the quality of education.

And principals with great management skills are at the heart of well-managed schools, he said.

"In schools, which have a good system, chances are the principal is good in management, is innovative, is able to tap the community, is able to put up a good Parent-Teacher Association system, is able to tap the local government unit special education fund, is able to make the classrooms clean and manage the teachers very well," Lapus said.

In a huge agency like the DepEd, everything boils down to management, the education secretary said.

"Because of the big number of schools, it is obvious that the management system is crucial. Human resources should be strengthened. Automatically, these will impact on the quality of education," Lapus said.

He said he wants to improve and professionalize the department and turn it into a "well-oiled and efficient bureaucracy."

The education department is the biggest government agency with more than 500,000 personnel nationwide.

Improving the management capability and efficient bureaucracy would breed quality education, Lapus said.

"Like no other department, the management system [in the DepEd] is a big challenge. We have to have a manpower-intensive thrust in the department," he said.

Lapus said the quality of education in the classroom is in the hands of teachers, hence the quality of teachers should be improved.

Witness tells of UP students' abduction

By Leila B. Salaverria and Dona Z. Pazzibugan

A WITNESS YESTERDAY TOLD the Court of Appeals that he saw armed men abduct two University of the Philippines students and a third person in Bulacan last month.

The witness, a 14-year-old boy, testified that armed men took UP students Sherlyn Cadapan and Karen Empeno and farmer Manuel Merino on June 26 and forced them into a jeep with partial plate number 597, according to the students' lawyer Rex Fernandez.

The students' families had alleged that the military was behind the incident and filed a petition for habeas corpus to compel it to produce the students.

Armed Forces Chief of Staff Lt. Gen. Hermogenes Esperon Jr., however, yesterday scoffed at the CA's order to the military to produce the two students.

"The investigation can go on but for a court to order us to produce somebody who is missing would be something that is hard to understand... (That) would be just like saying we were responsible for their disappearance," Esperon said.

Military officials, including Maj. Gen. Jovito Palparan, commander of the 7th Infantry Division that has jurisdiction over Bulacan, have persistently denied they were holding the two students.

Named respondents in the habeas corpus petition aside from Palparan were Maj. Gen. Romeo Tolentino, chief of the Northern Luzon Command; Lt. Col. Rogelio Boac, Lt. Francis Mirabella-Samson and Arnel Enriquez. All the respondents except for Boac did not show up at yesterday's hearing.

The teenage witness also affirmed that it was his father's signature on the joint affidavit that they submitted to the court.

The father, however, would not affirm his own signature out of fear, which was why he could not be made a witness, Fernandez said.

The second witness Fernandez presented was fish vendor Alberto Ramirez, who said he was abducted two days after the UP students disappeared. *With an AP report*

'That's not the picture we're getting'

By Christine O. Avendaño and Philip C. Tubeza

MALACAÑANG YESTERDAY APpeared unconvinced by the findings of the latest Pulse Asia survey which showed that more than half of Filipinos favor the new impeachment cases filed against President Macapagal-Arroyo.

Press Sec. Ignacio Bunye said the Pulse Asia survey finding was "not the picture that we are getting."

Bunye cited another recent survey conducted by the Social Weather Stations that showed "that more than half of Filipinos want to move on" from the political noise.

"We have been saying all along that this impeachment is a dead issue and we are borne out by previous surveys that many of our countrymen want the country to move on and concentrate on the more important activities that we need to do in order to move this country forward," Bunye said.

(Related story on Page A5)

He declined to make further comments on the Pulse Asia survey as he had yet to read the latest findings.

According to Pulse Asia, 56 percent of Filipino adults supported the impeachment complaint against Ms Arroyo.

Bunye said the new impeachment case would be "counterproductive" given that the country has been achieving "significant gains" that included a "respectable" growth, strong stock market and inflation is down, among others.

"So why rock the boat at this time?" the presidential spokesperson said.

Top administration legislators likewise downplayed the Pulse Asia survey, saying Congress was "not dependent" on surveys.

House Majority Leader Prospero Nograles and Deputy Majority Leader Edcel Lagman said the survey results would not affect the justice committee's deliberations next week on eight impeachment complaints filed against Ms Arroyo.

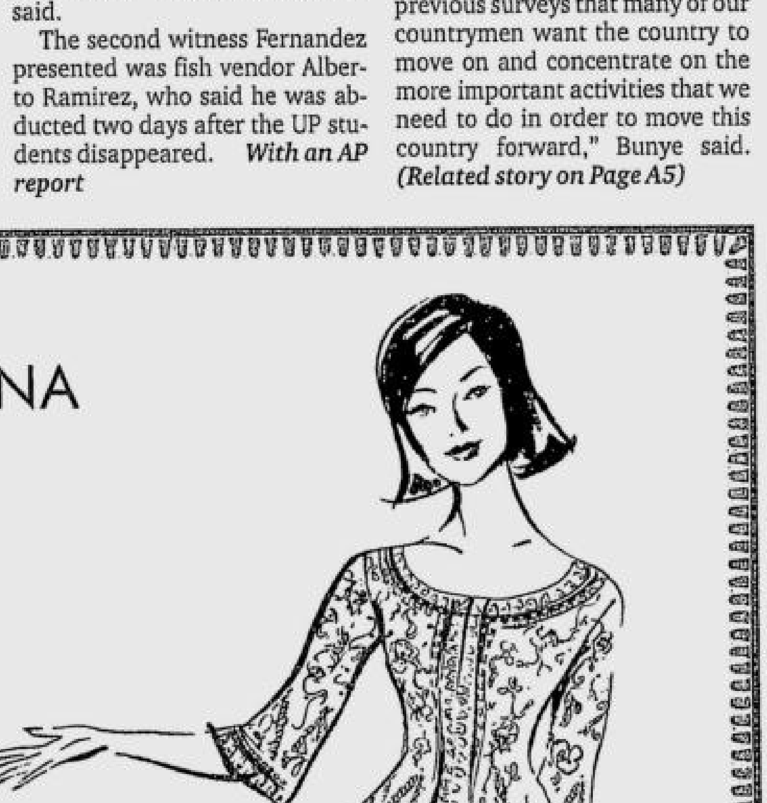
Nograles said that while he conceded that perhaps the Pulse Asia survey establishes a trend or public preference, "still our records clearly show that only 16 congressmen out of a possible 233 have expressed interest to impeach the President at this time."

"An overwhelming majority believe it is not good policy to impeach the President today," he said.

"We may need to amend the Constitution to be able to impeach the President by results of the Pulse Asia surveys. Otherwise, it won't wash, Congress does not decide on the basis of surveys," Nograles said.

But Bayan Muna party-list Rep. Teddy Casiño said the Pulse Asia survey supported the opposition's impeachment case against Ms Arroyo.

"I think that survey is really accurate since it shows that the public wants her impeached to search for the truth. That is very consistent with what we're saying," Casiño said.



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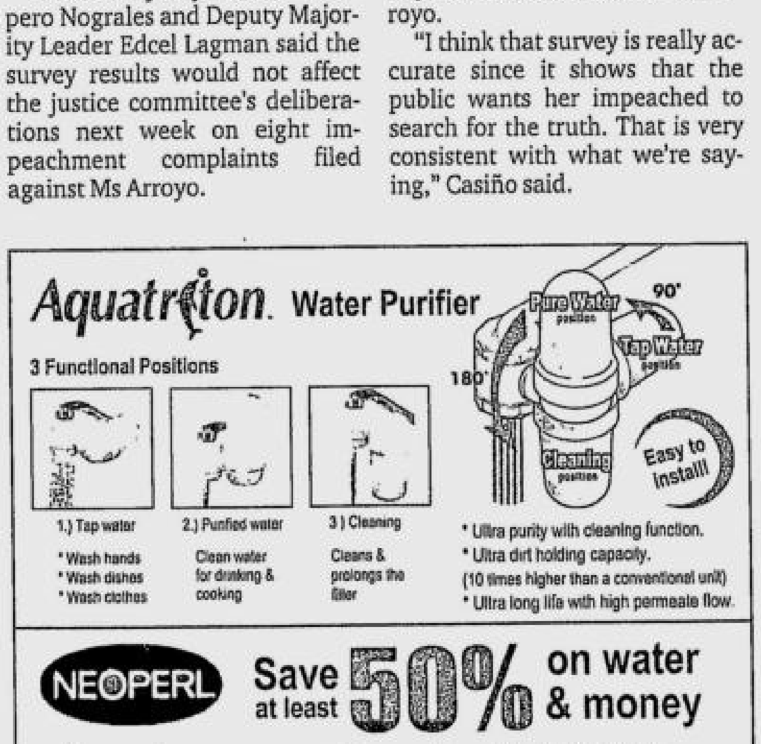

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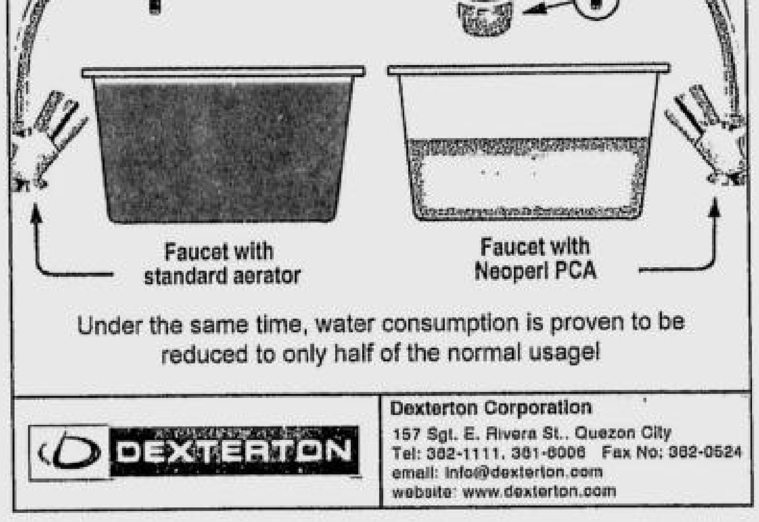

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SC ruling vindicates Romualdezes, says mayor

By Joey A. Gabieta
PDI Visayas Bureau

TACLOBAN CITY—MAYOR Alfredo "Bejo" Romualdez yesterday said his family felt vindicated by the Supreme Court's dismissal of the 24 graft charges filed against his elder brother, former Ambassador Benjamin "Kokoy" Romualdez.

The mayor said the dismissal of the cases was proof that the charges filed against his family, the Marcoses and their so-called cronies and associates had no basis and were politically motivated.

"I am happy for him that the Supreme Court has cleared him of all these graft cases. I knew that these would be dismissed by the courts as we maintained that these cases were filed against us as political revenge," Romualdez told the INQUIRER.

Last week, the Supreme Court's Special First Division dismissed the 24 graft charges against Benjamin Romualdez, who served as Leyte's governor and ambassador to the United States during the Marcos regime, on technical grounds.

The High Court ordered the dismissal of the graft charges that were pending against him before the Sandiganbayan and the Manila City Regional Trial Court because the 10 to 15-year prescription period within which he should have been charged in court for the alleged offenses had lapsed.

Kokoy was accused of failing to file his statements of assets and liabilities (SAL) from 1963 to 1985 and for the period of 1960 to 1966 during his tenure as technical assistant at the Department of Foreign Affairs.

"These are all politically motivated and I am also confident that the pending cases filed against me will also be dismissed in my favor," Mayor Romualdez said, referring to the graft cases he is facing before the Sandiganbayan.

The mayor was accused of interfering in the sale of Engineer Island by the state-owned National Shipyard and Steel Corp. to private firm Bataan Shipyard and Engineering Co. Inc. (Baseco) for P4.41 million.

The Presidential Commission on Good Government, the agency tasked with recovering the ill-gotten wealth of the Marcoses and their cronies, claimed that at the time the property was worth P12.02 million.

Bejo, now on his third and last term, was also accused of intervening in the state-owned National Development Corp.'s sale of the 3,343-square-meter Pandacan Slipway to Baseco for only P836,000.

Romualdez said he was innocent and that his family's only "fault" was their being close to Marcos, who was married to their elder sister, Imelda.

Marcos was ousted from power in February 1986 during the first People Power revolt.

Jackie Chan coming

KUNG FU SUPERstar Jackie Chan will fly to the Philippines to drum up investors' interest for a coffee shop that he plans to open in Manila, an advertising executive said yesterday.

"It's for a road show to get investors for the Jackie Chan's Java Coffee," said Arlene Alano of Campaigns and Grey, an agency that handles advertisement for the shop.

Alano said Chan will arrive for a one-day visit Friday to announce details of his new coffee-shop chain before the media and prospective Filipino investors.

Chan said last year that movie-making was still his biggest priority and greatest source of income despite an expanding business empire that includes a clothing label, fitness clubs, restaurants and a line of cookies.

He operates restaurants under his name and has teamed up with the California Fitness gym chain.

Alano said it was the first time Chan will be going into the coffee-shop business. *AP*

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Cherie Gil, 43

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BIR ₱3B short of 6-month target

By Cynthia D. Balana

THE BUREAU OF INTERNAL REVENUE HAS failed to meet its six-month cumulative collection target of P321.2 billion, Commissioner Jose Mario Buñag said yesterday during the BIR's 102nd anniversary celebration.

In his report to President Macapagal-Arroyo, which he read at the rites, Buñag said the bureau's collection was only P318.4 billion, for a shortfall of some P3 billion. This, however, was still way above last year's first-half collection of P260.9 billion.

Buñag said that from its operations alone, the BIR collected P302 billion from January to June this year, higher than its target of P300.87 billion.

The difference of some P16 billion came from the collection of withholding and documentary stamp taxes from the sale of T-bills by the Bureau of Treasury.

In June alone, the agency raked in P48.031 billion against its goal of P46 billion, for a surplus of P2.02 billion or 4.39 percent. Last year's June collection was only P36.3 billion.

Buñag attributed the increase in revenues to the intensified collection campaign being conducted by the BIR's Large Taxpayers Service, the 19 revenue regions and the 115 revenue district offices nationwide.

"We've hurdled the many challenges thrown before us," Buñag said, adding that the agency was on track to plug the loopholes in revenue collections which Congress said cost the government between P50 and P60 billion.

Among the other major challenges to collections cited by Buñag were the lower volumes of government securities and the increased use of tax credits.

Buñag also unveiled several key tax reform programs to meet the P675.35-billion collection target for the year.

12-month birthday

These include enhanced registration, filing and payment systems; strengthened audit capabilities, particularly in handling Operation: Rate (Run After Tax Evaders) cases; improved collection enforcement and arrears management; heightened taxpayer service development and compliance; a better performance management system, and nationwide roll-out of e-services and computerized systems.

Finance Secretary Gary Teves, whose birthday coincided with the BIR anniversary, said he was confident the bureau would be able to meet its yearend collection target.

"I don't want a one-day birthday. I want a 12-month birthday, a birthday of continued increases in tax collections. May I ask you to give me another six months of birthdays?" Teves told the assembled BIR officials, employees and guests.

Teves stressed the need to improve the government's fiscal position and urged the people to ask for receipts whenever they bought something in order to plug one collection loophole without having to resort to new tax measures.

He said the effective implementation of the expanded added-value tax and an improved fiscal performance had put the country back on the investment map or "at least in the subconscious of foreign investors."

He said even the finance minister of France, in one of their meetings recently, cited the Philippines as a country to emulate for the hard decisions it had made in the face of the oil crisis.

Corrections

IN THE JULY 27 ISSUE, a map accompanying an Across the Nation story on Page A13—"Bataan villages flooded as currents breach dike"—misspelled the name of a river in Bataan. The correct spelling of the river's name is Pentor Daang Bago—not Pentor Daand Baga.

* * *

IN THE SAME ISSUE, a front-page story—"Bolante's asylum bid puts him beyond reach of RP law"—misstated the amount involved in the fertilizer fund scam. The amount involved is P728 million—not P728.

* * *

Readers may send their requests for correction of factual errors in writing to the Day Desk, Philippine Daily Inquirer, PDI Building, Chino Roces Avenue corner Mascardo Street, Makati City, fax Nos. 897-47-93/94; e-mail address: daydesk@inquirer.com.ph.

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THE DAILY GOSPEL

Wednesday, August 2, 2006
17th Week in Ordinary Time
Eusebius of Vercelli / Peter Julian Eymard
1st Reading: Jer 15:10, 16-21
Gospel: Matthew 13:44-46

Jesus said to the crowds, "The kingdom of heaven is like a treasure hidden in a field. The one who finds it buries it again; and so happy is he, that he goes and sells everything he has, in order to buy that field.

Again the kingdom of heaven is like a trader who is looking for fine pearls. Once he has found a pearl of exceptional quality, he goes away, sells everything he has and buys it."

Commentary

Jeremiah is distraught, near despairing, wishing he had not been born, because of what he sees and what the Lord demands that he say to the people. God tells him that he is with him no matter what and will deliver him from the violent. God is his strength.

And the parable tells us that God is our strength, our treasure, wealth, everything. Once we find it then we must rejoice exceedingly and give everything for it. It is as though we found a pearl beyond price but we must have it—the relationship with the Father that Jesus has in the Spirit and the presence of that revealed as justice for all, in abiding peace.

Do we rejoice? Have we sold anything to own the treasure and the field it is hidden in?

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An Appeal to the DOE and oil companies:
GREATER TRANSPARENCY REQUIRED ON OIL PRICING.

World oil prices are soaring due to the escalating conflicts in the Middle East and Africa. And with the announcement of the oil companies ***that there will be weekly oil price increases of 50 centavos***, a petition for a transport fare hike is inevitable.

Consumer & Oil Price Watch (COPW) believes that in this time of volatile oil prices, there is an URGENT need for greater TRANSPARENCY on the part of oil companies and the DOE.

As stated by Section 14d) of the Oil Deregulation Law (RA 8479), ***oil companies must submit, under OATH, the basis of any oil price change 72 hours before they implement a price change***. Oil companies must also provide accurate and updated data on inventory at hand and actual cost of the crude and petroleum products so that the DOE could determine if the price increase is reasonable.

TO PROTECT THE CONSUMING PUBLIC, COPW strongly urges the DOE to REACTIVATE the Joint Task Force to enforce these IMPORTANT PROVISIONS of the Oil Deregulation Law.

COPW also appeals to the government, the transport sector and the private sector to work closely to prevent a petition for a transport fare increase.

COPW Chairman Raul Concepcion has met with Presidential Management Staff Arthur Yap last week & briefed him on the need for the COPW, government agencies (LTFRB, DOE, DOJ, DOTC, and DOF), the transport sector, and oil companies, to be proactive and work as a team to adopt measures that will avoid a transport fare hike.

COPW RECOMMENDS THE FOLLOWING MEASURES:

1. Remove the 2% tariff on imported crude and petroleum products for **DIESEL only** for the month of August & September as we expect an improvement in the Middle East crisis. The price of sweet crude has dropped from a high $78 to $74 per barrel. On the other hand the DUBAI crude which has higher sulphur content and used by Petron and Shell Oil Refineries is $ 69.00 per barrel.
2. Convert taxi and AUV engines from gasoline to Liquefied Petroleum Gas **ONLY** for the transport sector. Since LPG is 50% cheaper than gasoline, the conversion kit will have a payback period of two months.
3. A P35 subsidy on standard 11-kg LPG cylinders used by low-income households in depressed areas in Metro Manila. COPW will work closely with the DOE, DTI and the NGOs on how we can quantify the subsidy and prevent abuses.
4. For NEW Players to source their diesel and gasoline from oil refiners Petron and Shell as their cost is substantially lower than the **MOPS** (Means of Platts Singapore) regional pricing which today is **$86** per barrel for unleaded gasoline and $88 for DIESEL.

The escalating price of oil is a global problem. One that is non-political in nature.

We urge our leaders in government to unite, and work hand-in-hand with the oil companies and the transport sector in order to ease this burden on the consuming public.

CPW CONSUMER & OIL PRICE WATCH

Raul Concepcion
RAUL T. CONCEPCION
Chairman

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Impeachment: Magic number is less than 79

By Jerome Aning

THE OPPOSITION IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES now needs less than 79 signatures to transmit the Articles of Impeachment against President Macapagal-Arroyo to the Senate with the recent appointment of several legislators to the Cabinet.

Representatives Ronaldo Puno of Antipolo City, Rolando Andaya Jr. of Camarines Sur's 1st district and Jesli Lapus of Tarlac's 3rd district were appointed to the interior, budget and education departments, respectively.

Another factor was the demise last July 28 of Northern Samar 2nd district Rep. Romualdo Vicencio.

Andaya and Puno were appointed in February while Lapus was appointed last month. They have yet to be confirmed by the Commission on Appointments.

The Cabinet appointments and Vicencio's death decreased the number of members of the House of Representatives to 232. Under the Constitution, one-third of the House membership is required for the impeachment against the President to proceed to the Senate for trial. Last year, with 236 House members, 79 was the so-called "Magic Number."

Vacant legislative posts

With 232 House members at present, the new one-third could either be 77 or 78 depending on the rules of the House in rounding up numbers. In its impeachment bid last year, the opposition failed to muster the required 79 despite the defection of some administration congressmen.

The opposition also failed to get the 79 votes needed to overturn the justice committee report rejecting the impeachment complaint.

James Arthur Jimenez, chief of the Commission on Elections' education and information division, said the four legislative positions may be left vacant for the rest of the term because it would be too late to fill them up via special elections.

As this developed, members of the House committee on justice yesterday rallied behind their chairman Rep. Simeon Datumanong whom Ilocos Norte Rep. Imee Marcos urged to inhibit from the impeachment process.

Reps. Salacnib Baterina of Ilocos Sur and Aurelio Umali of Nueva Ecija said they saw no reason for Datumanong to stay out of the hearings as he had consistently shown fairness in the resolution of the complaints against the President last year.

New group of lawyers

Meanwhile, a new alliance of lawyers has taken pro-administration legislators to task for flaunting that the House committee on justice would kill the second impeachment initiative next month even before this panel could formally start deliberating on at least six versions of the same complaint.

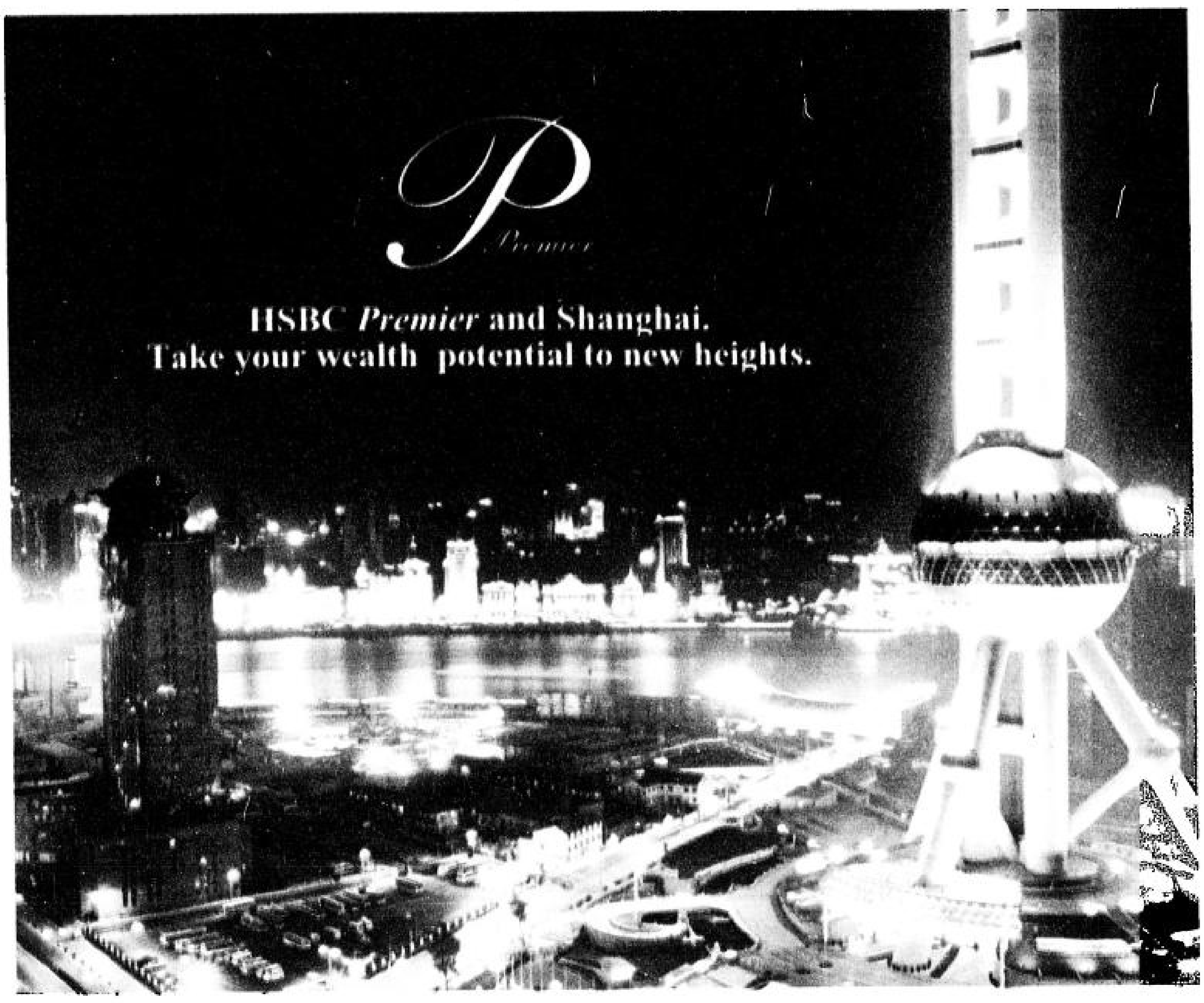
The Lawyers in Favor of Economic Development (LIFE) said the majority coalition should allow the impeachment proceeding to take its due course instead of prejudging the case—and unwittingly providing anti-Arroyo forces a convenient excuse to seek a resolution of this lingering controversy outside the realm of the Constitution.

LIFE was reacting to statements made by pro-administration lawmakers like House Majority Leader Prospero Nograles that the Committee on Justice is likely to finish deliberating on the revived impeachment complaint by end-August, so the chamber can ostensibly proceed to more pressing matters.

"Pro-administration lawmakers should stop gloating about their perceived victory in prejudging the case and foretelling the supposed demise of this second initiative to impeach the President in a month's time," said law professor and bar reviewer Mauricio Ulep, spokesman of LIFE, which claims to be "a new group of lawyers advocating rapid growth through adherence to constitutional processes."

"Due process as provided for in the Constitution should be followed by the ruling majority in the House of Representatives when it comes to this impeachment process," Ulep said. "Everybody should be given the chance to be heard and present whatever evidence they may have to back such serious charges as culpable violation of the Constitution, betrayal of public trust and corruption being hurled at the President of the Republic no less."

"It is premature for majority legislators to strike down the impeachment complaint at this point when the House justice committee has not even started tackling the case," Ulep said.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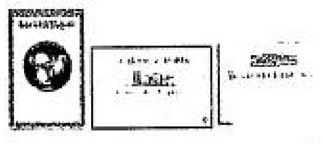

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Made to move

Ailing Castro cedes power

From page A1

sustained bleeding" stunned Cubans on the island and in exile, and marked the first time that Castro, two weeks away from his 80th birthday, had relinquished power in 47 years of absolute rule.

In power since the triumph of the Cuban revolution on Jan. 1, 1959, Castro has been the world's longest-ruling head of government. Only Thailand's King Bhumibol Adulyadej, crowned in 1946, and Britain's Queen Elizabeth, crowned in 1952, have been head of state longer.

Castro's ironclad rule has ensured Cuba's place among the world's five remaining communist countries, along with China, Vietnam, Laos and North Korea.

The news came Monday night in a statement read live on state television by Castro's secretary, Carlos Valenciaga. Castro did not appear on the broadcast.

Defense Minister Raul Castro, who turned 75 in June and who has assumed a more public profile in recent weeks, also did not appear on television and made no statement of his own.

Holding several No. 2 posts in Cuba's power structure, Raul for decades has been the constitutional successor. The younger Castro, who lacks his brother's charisma and oratorical flair, indicated in June he would govern Cuba through the Communist Party.

The elder Castro, who took control of Cuba in 1959, resisted repeated US attempts to oust him and survived communism's demise elsewhere, said he was handing over the presidency and the leadership of the party to Raul in a move of "provisional character."

Monday's announcement said Castro had suffered gastrointestinal bleeding, apparently due to stress from a heavy travel and work schedule during recent trips to Argentina and eastern Cuba.

Thinner than usual

Castro last appeared in public on Wednesday as he marked the 53rd anniversary of his July 26 barracks assault that launched the revolution. The Cuban leader seemed thinner than usual and somewhat weary that day during long speeches in the eastern Cuban cities of Bayamo and Holguin.

"The operation obligates me to undertake several weeks of rest," Castro's letter read. Extreme stress "had provoked in me a sharp intestinal crisis with sustained bleeding that obligated me to undergo a complicated surgical procedure."

It was unknown when or where the surgery took place, as well as where Castro was recovering.

Life-threatening

Ongoing intestinal bleeding can be serious and potentially life-threatening, said Dr. Stephen Hanauer, gastroenterology chief at the University of Chicago hospitals.

Hanauer said it was hard to know the cause of Castro's bleeding without knowing what part of the digestive tract was affected.

Ulcers are a common cause of bleeding in the stomach or upper intestine, while a condition called diverticulosis is a common cause of bleeding in the lower intestine, especially in people over age 60, Hanauer said.

This condition involves weakened spots in the intestinal lining that form pouches that can become inflamed, provoking bleeding.

The calm delivery of Monday's announcement appeared to signal that there would be an orderly succession to Raul should Fidel become permanently incapacitated.

But Fidel seemed optimistic of recovery, asking that celebrations scheduled for his 80th birthday on Aug. 13 be postponed until Dec. 2, the 50th anniversary of Cuba's Revolutionary Armed Forces.

Dancing

Over nearly five decades, hundreds of thousands of Cubans have fled Castro's rule, many of them settling in Miami.

The news of Castro's delegation of power sent hundreds of people waving Cuban flags on Little Havana's Calle Ocho, shouting "Cuba! Cuba! Cuba!" as drivers honked their horns.

"The Cuban people might accept, for a short time, the imposition of Raul Castro as the government leader," said Ernesto Diaz Rodriguez, leader of Alpha 66, a Miami-based Cuban American paramilitary group long involved in efforts to overthrow the Cuban leader.

Armando Tellez said Cuban Americans deserved to celebrate. "My first reaction was disbelief. My second reaction was hope," he said as he sat on the hood of his red truck and watched as hundreds of cars clogged the streets of Hialeah, a heavily Cuban-American city northwest of Miami.

While Castro's enemies in exile celebrated, there was no unusual activity on Havana's streets overnight Tuesday as Cubans awaited more word on Castro's condition.

Sad, shocked

Waiters at a popular café in Old Havana were momentarily stunned by the news, but quickly returned to work.

"He'll get better, without a doubt," said Agustin Lopez. "There are really good doctors here, and he's extremely strong."

In another nearby plaza, Cuban musicians kept playing for foreign tourists at outdoor cafés. Signs on the plaza's colonial buildings put up during the recent Cuban holiday said, "Live on Fidel, for 80 more."

"We're really sad, and pretty shocked," said Ines Cesar, a retired 58-year-old metal worker who had gathered with neighbors to discuss the news. "But everyone's relaxed too: I think he'll be fine."

Asked about how she felt having Raul Castro at the helm of the nation, Cesar paused and said one word: "Normal."

Martha Beatriz Roque, a leading Cuban government opponent in Havana, said she believed Castro must be gravely ill to have stepped aside—even temporarily.

Opposition worried

"No one knows if he'll even be alive Dec. 2 when he's supposed to celebrate his birthday," Roque said in a telephone interview.

She said opposition members worried they could be targeted for repression during a government change—especially if authorities fear civil unrest. *Reports from AP and Reuters*

Caparas life story . . .

From page A1

maliit na medium *para sa pagpapalaganap ng wika* (*Komiks* is one medium being looked down upon in propagating the language)," Nolasco told the INQUIRER.

Komiks as literature

"*Ang alam lang natin ay yung nasa academe. Ang gusto naming ipakita ngayon ay yung pagpapahalaga sa mga ganitong panitikan* (We only gave recognition to members of the academe. What we want to do now is to show the importance of these types of literature).

"As far as I know, this is the first time that we have given the award to a figure that is not from the academe," Nolasco said, referring to Caparas.

Most important trophy

Accepting the award, Caparas said this was the most important trophy he had received so far as a writer and film and television director.

"*Daig nito ang alin mang awards. Daig nito ang pinakamalaking* cash prize (This beats all my other awards. This tops the biggest cash prize I have received)," Caparas told the INQUIRER after the ceremonies, which featured dance numbers from the Earthsavers Dreams Ensemble.

Caparas and his wife, movie producer and actress Donna Villa, have received at least 20 awards from different film award-giving bodies.

"I am very proud of my husband," a beaming Villa told the INQUIRER. "He has achieved a lot of things as a writer and as a film director.

"He really deserves this award even if I won't hear the end of how he finally got one over me," she joked.

Caparas has beaten the odds in life, which he described as stranger than fiction.

Bringing home fried chicken

The sixth of nine siblings of an urban poor couple, Salvador and Florentina, living in Ugong, Pasig, Caparas dropped out of first year high school to work to help support his family.

"My father did not have a job," he said. "And my mother was just a laundrywoman. I had to work so that we could eat. There was no money for any of us siblings to go to school. There was even a time when all of us stayed at home and did not go to school. We were that poor."

Caparas took on odd jobs—water carrier, boatman ferrying passengers on the Marikina River, construction worker, factory worker, and finally, security guard in the publishing house Carmelo and Bauermann in Makati.

"My biggest dream then was to be able to bring home fried chicken to my parents," he recalled. "They often said that eating *sinigang na baboy* (sour soup pork) was like having a fiesta at home."

1,000 nights of reading

Caparas relished his work as a night security guard of Carmelo and Bauermann, staying awake by reading all the books that the company printed.

"Oh, I read everything they printed," Caparas said. "I read for more than 1,000 nights—textbooks, books about medicine, about law, about important people. I always looked forward to working because I found myself in these books. That was how I got an education."

When workers of Carmelo and Bauermann went on strike, violence erupted at the picket line and shots were fired. A stray bullet hit Caparas' heel. He was only 19 and felt that his life was over.

"The bullet could have hit me in the head, but it went to my heel," he said. "I thought that maybe, I had not yet fulfilled my purpose in life."

With no money for proper medical care, Caparas endured the hardships of an indigent patient at the Philippine General Hospital.

"I didn't have money so I was placed in the corridor," he recounted. "I slept on a piece of plywood placed between two empty carts of beer. I fell when the plywood broke and hurt my heel again. *Ang hirap ng mahirap* (It's difficult to be poor)."

First novel

For six months, Caparas was not able to walk because of the bullet wound. It was then that he turned to writing, creating his first *komiks* novel, "Citadel," about three men who painted the same woman's face.

He wrote by long hand, on pieces of bond paper or Globe notebooks. Up to this day, Caparas still creates with these tools, which he described as primitive.

"I have always worked that way," he said. "I don't think I can adapt to a computer."

Caparas sold his first novel to Superstar, a *komiks* published by the Roces Publications. From then on, there was no stopping Caparas from creating heroes and crafting stories that eventually took him away from the squalor of poverty.

Panday

Caparas saw inspiration in everything: A brilliant comet flashing in the night sky gave birth to "Panday," perhaps his most acclaimed work after it was made into a movie with no less than Fernando Poe Jr. as the star.

A lonely boy sitting on a staircase became "Gabriel." A henpecked husband became "Andres de Saya." He churned out his first novels for P56 a week.

Titles like "Pieta," "Tuklaw," "Maestro," "Kahit Ako'y Lupa," "Totoy Bato," "Lumuhod Ka sa Lupa," "Kamandag" and "Kamagong" celebrated machismo.

"I'm a man so I wrote novels that were about men and were for men," Caparas said.

Don Ramon Roces

Sometime in the 1970s, publisher Don Ramon Roces called Caparas aside and asked him to write a story that would interest women.

Over formal dinner, Caparas, who was more worried about using the right silverware than impressing the old Don, shot his mouth off about an ugly woman who was oppressed by society because she was ugly.

Off the top of his head, Caparas wove the tale of his tragic heroine "Bakekang," which would soon be serialized and aired over GMA 7. In the 1980s, "Bakekang" was made into a movie starring Nora Aunor.

So far, Caparas has written 800 *komiks* novels, 200 of which have been made into movies.

Three-year break

In 1990, Caparas abruptly stopped writing for the *komiks*. He went on a three-year hiatus with wife Donna.

"She complained that I did not have time for her," Caparas said. "I was writing 36 novels simultaneously at that time and we barely spoke. I decided then that she was more important to me than any of my novels."

In 1993, Caparas returned to the scene and became the king of massacre movies.

Critics have not been kind to his film work, but this does not bother Caparas.

"The success at the tills of my movies is enough for me," he said.

Television ratings also do not faze him.

"My novels, like 'Panday' (recently aired as a *cineserye* over ABS-CBN starring Jericho Rosales) are bigger than the ratings," he said.

Caparas is also larger than life. Never seen without his trademark baseball cap and sunglasses, he is often envied by his peers. Once, Nick Joaquin had approached him and congratulated him on his earnings, Caparas recalled.

"He told me that I was luckier than most literary writers who seemed to be always starving," Caparas said of his encounter with the late national artist. "I told him I was lucky in getting the breaks."

Millionaire

Caparas is now a millionaire, enjoying great rides like a Porsche, and the high life in his Alabang home. But he said he still felt poor.

"It is hard to shake off poverty," he said. "I cannot look back at my past without bitterness. When I started to earn big money, I was confused. I did not know what to do with it."

Eventually, he used his money to help poor children in Pasig—about a thousand of them—go to school.

"I saw myself in these kids," he said. "They wanted to learn, but did not have money. I am happy I could give them what they wanted."

Poverty as inspiration

A road in Pasig City has been named after Caparas for his contributions to humanity.

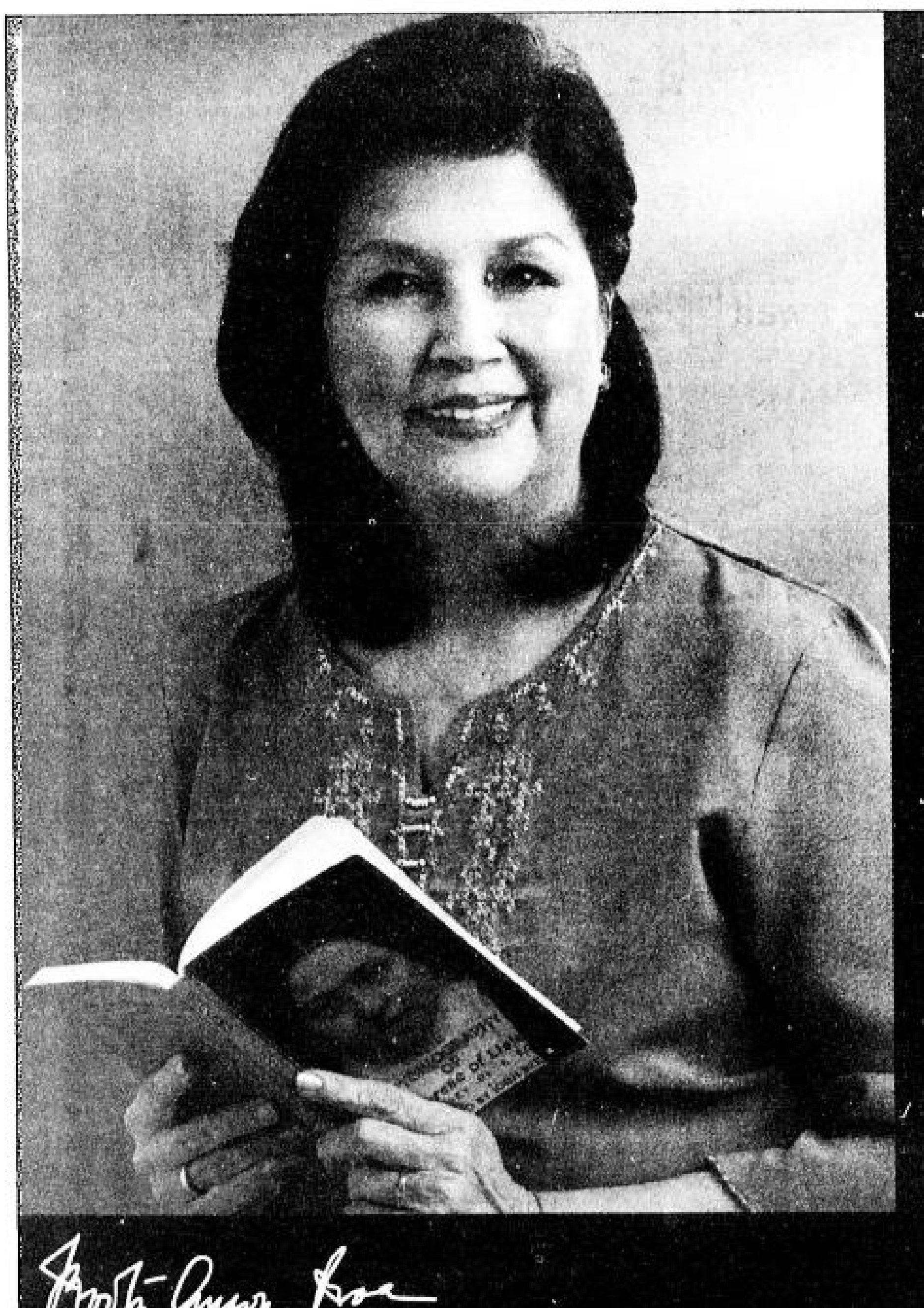
"Let poverty serve as your inspiration," Caparas told the audience at yesterday's awards ceremonies. "Do not let it get in the way of your dreams."

Caparas has not yet placed "Wakas" (The End) to the story of his life.

"There are still so many things I want to do," he said.

One of them is the adaptation of his *komiks* novels in English for publication in American comics.

"Recently, a publisher in the US was interested in translating my novels into English," he said. "He said my stories are universal and could easily be adapted in the US. I might just do that."



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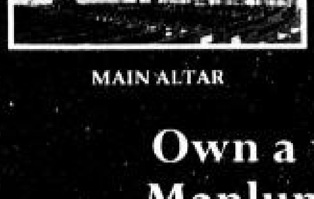

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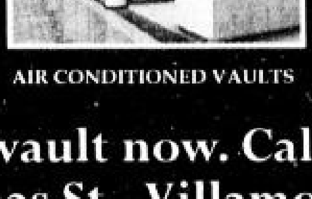

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SC imputed no crime on Abalos, says lawyer

By Norman Bordadora

A LAWYER FOR TWO ELECTION COMMISSIONERS yesterday said his clients had no liability in the billion-peso poll automation deal that was nullified by the Supreme Court since the tribunal never ascribed any crime to them.

Federico Alday Jr., lawyer for Commission on Elections chair Benjamin Abalos and Commissioner Florentino Tuason in the Ombudsman investigation into the poll automation contract between the Comelec and the Mega Pacific consortium, said an analysis of the Supreme Court decision nullifying the deal showed that majority of the justices didn't impute any criminal liability to any election commissioner.

"The decision of the Supreme Court, which should be taken in its entirety, voided the election automation contract between the Comelec and Mega Pacific," Alday said, "but a majority of the court … did not find [any] basis to ascribe any criminal intent or liability on the part of the Comelec officials."

Alday made the statement as the Ombudsman panel looking into the culpability of the commissioners continued its hearings yesterday.

The Ombudsman has so far found Commissioner Resurreccion Borra, head of the Comelec bids and awards committee that recommended the Mega Pacific deal, liable in the deal and recommended his impeachment by the House of Representatives.

Alday said the opinion of then Chief Justice Hilario Davide Jr. for instance, showed that "there is no suggestion that graft and corruption attended the bidding process, or that the contract price was excessive or unreasonable."

He said Davide's opinion should be given much weight since he had been a Comelec chair himself.

Alday said Davide had pointed out that the petitioner—the Information Technology Foundation of the Philippines—did not impute any fraud in the deal, merely alleging that "the bidding and award process was fatally flawed."

"The dissenting opinion of Chief Justice Davide should be given much weight not only because he was the chief justice at the time, but also because he was a former chair of the Comelec itself and, thus, was not only knowledgeable but quite familiar with the situation and the processes in the commission," Alday said.

Rape trial goes on 2-week break

THE MARATHON trial of four American soldiers charged with conspiring to rape a Filipino woman last year was adjourned for 16 days, as the prosecution's last witness could not appear in court until fully recovering from an undisclosed sickness.

After consulting with the prosecution and defense panels, Makati Regional Trial Court Judge Benjamin Pozon yesterday scheduled the continuation of trial on Aug. 17, when prosecution witness. Dr. Rolando Ortiz II is expected to be recalled to the stand for another round of questioning by defense lawyers.

The judge also tentatively set for Sept. 4 the start of the defense panel's presentation of witnesses and other evidence to rebutt the allegations of rape against four US soldiers, part of the Okinawa-based 31st Marine Expeditionary Force who took part in the RP-US war games "Talon Vision."

Doc is sick

Ortiz, the prosecution's 18th witness, was unable to appear for yesterday's scheduled hearing as he was suffering from an illness, which prosecutors disclosed to Pozon in a confidential sidebar. State Prosecutor Hazel Valdez said in open court that the doctor may be available only after two weeks.

Also a criminology professor, Ortiz was the medico-legal officer who examined complainant Nicole at the James Gordon Memorial Hospital in Olongapo City some 33 hours after the victim was allegedly raped in a moving van inside the Subic Bay Freeport.

In his testimony on direct examination, Ortiz told the court that Nicole's bruises in her genital area, arms and legs were consistent with her allegations that she was sexually abused on Nov. 1, 2005. The complainant had alleged that Lance Cpl. Daniel Smith forced himself onto her while she was dead drunk that night, while Staff Sgt. Chad Carpentier and Lance Cpls. Keith Silkwood and Dominic Duplantis cheered him on.

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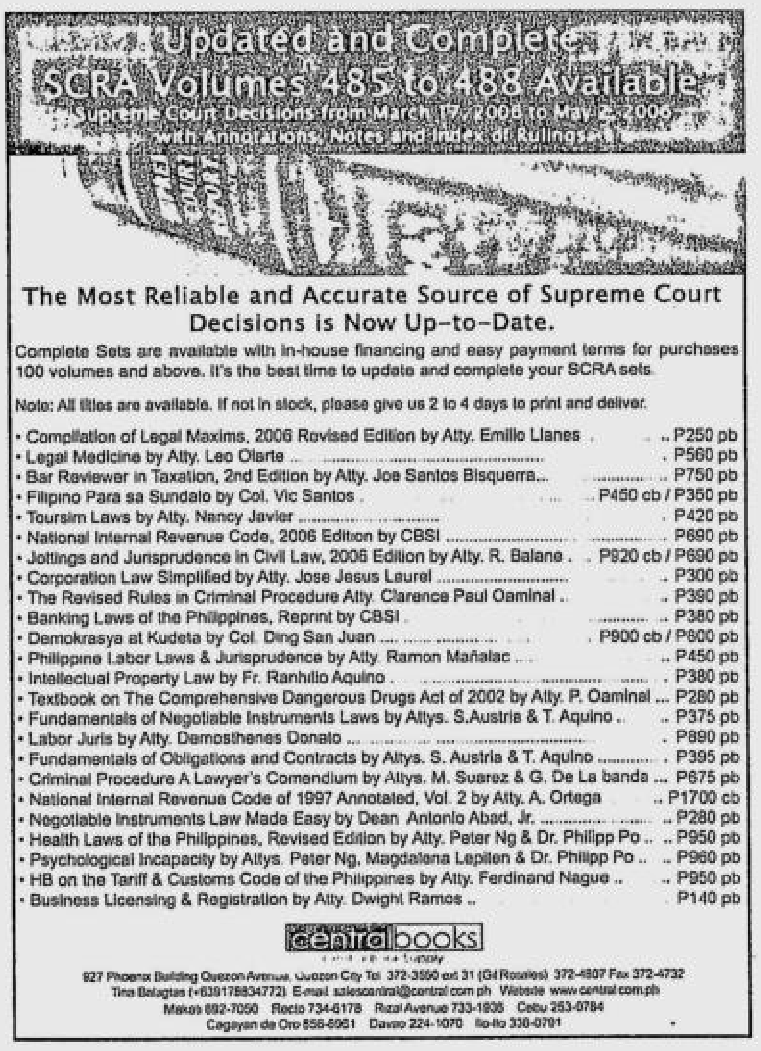
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Back from Lebanon, nightmare far from over, OFWs’ kin advised

By Christian V. Esguerra

DO THEY GET NIGHTMARES? DO THEY sweat a lot? Are they unusually agitated? Do they have sudden mood changes?

Relatives and friends should watch out for any of these signs in dealing with overseas Filipino workers coming home from the war in Lebanon, a psychologist said yesterday.

They are symptoms of posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD) usually evident in persons caught in nerve-wracking situations, said Dr. Isabel Melgar, executive director of the Ateneo Wellness Center.

“Family members should be sensitive to these conditions so they could immediately seek treatment for their loved ones,” Melgar told the INQUIRER.

According to the website of the US Department of Veteran Affairs, PTSD could occur “following the experience or witnessing of life-threatening events such as military combat, natural disasters, terrorist incidents, serious accidents, or violent personal assaults like rape.”

“Most survivors of trauma return to normal given a little time,” according to the department’s National Center for PTSD. “However, some people will have stress reactions that do not go away on their own, or may even get worse over time. These individuals may develop PTSD.”

Melgar said Filipino workers coming home from Lebanon were particularly likely to experience PTSD considering the stress of having to evacuate because of the war. She said a person need not actually see an actual bombing to develop PTSD.

“The fact that they had to cross borders to safety, be uprooted from their jobs because of the possibility of being killed in the war is stressful enough,” she explained.

Susceptible to stress

And even under normal conditions, OFWs, especially domestic helpers, are more susceptible to stress because they’re not in a “position of power,” Melgar said.

“If you’re not the boss, you’re more vulnerable to stress,” she said. “By being helpers, they could be learning to be helpless. Their workplace is a perfect breeding ground for stress disorder.”

One way to avoid stress is for a person to develop “hardiness,” a sense of toughness rooted in one’s character, according to the expert. “But if you have a weak character, you’ll most likely experience stress.”

According to the US agency, people suffering from PTSD “relive the experience through nightmares and flashbacks, have difficulty sleeping, and feel detached or estranged.”

Symptoms can last long

“These symptoms can be severe enough and last long enough to significantly impair the person’s daily life,” the agency said.

Melgar said relatives and friends of OFWs should watch out for any indications of PTSD, considering that they could manifest themselves sooner or later.

“We still don’t know who among the men and women who came home from Lebanon are experiencing this,” she said. “So family members should really be conscious of any indication.”

Melgar noted that a person with PTSD could already be having nightmares connected with his traumatic experience without telling his family about them.

“Knowledge of patients is key,” she said.

Buffer mechanism

The expert said it helped that some sort of “buffer mechanism” for stressed OFWs was in place in Lebanon in the form of Church-based or informal support groups.

She suggested that the government put up a more organized network of support to help OFWs deal with the condition.

“Even a simple get-together among OFWs is a buffer network,” Melgar said.

Senate summons 6 GMA execs, threatens arrest

From page A1

That’s the only remedy we have right now,” he told reporters.

In a letter to Estrada, Executive Secretary Eduardo Ermita said he and the other officials could not attend last Monday’s hearing because the invitation did not cite the statute proposed to be enacted that prompted the inquiry and did not specify the questions to be asked.

The inquiry was prompted by claims by Ambassador to Lebanon Al Francis Bichara that he had not received a single centavo from Manila despite official pronouncements that the Department of Foreign Affairs and the Overseas Workers Welfare Administration had sent substantial amounts for the Lebanon repatriation. *(See story on Page A1.)*

There’s basis for snub

Sen. Joker Arroyo conceded that there was a basis for these officials to skip the hearing.

“If you read the decision declaring EO 464 unconstitutional, there are some provisions that require Congress to specify certain guidelines [on the appearance of officials],” he said, referring to the gag order thrown out by the Supreme Court.

“I think that is what they are banking on, that we should provide the guidelines, namely, what is the law, what is the statute that is going to be considered,” he said.

Arroyo, however, said that their position was “tainted” by the decision of the invited officials to hold a briefing simultaneously with the Senate hearing on Monday afternoon.

“They could have done that the next day. Why at the same time? This was an affront on the hearing in the Senate,” Arroyo said.

But as far as Villar was concerned, the officials from the executive branch merely used technical loopholes to evade the hearing.

‘They looked for loopholes’

“Obviously they looked for loopholes. But we are going to remedy that in future hearings so there won’t be any more questions. Although we do not believe that it’s necessary to put these information in the invitation, we will put them just the same,” he said.

Former President Fidel Ramos yesterday told reporters that Congress should temporarily set aside their investigations. “The first effort should be just to help ... This is just like a fire in your neighborhood. Go and help put out the fire. Do not investigate right away,” said Ramos.

Senate Minority Leader Aquilino Pimentel Jr. yesterday said the Palace’s request for a P500-million allocation for the evacuation of overseas workers was “proof of the allegation” that Owwa funds had been misused.

The emergency fund, he added, “should therefore be thoroughly scrutinized during debates on the matter.”

Request for P500 million

Administration and opposition members of the House of Representatives said they did not see any problem in approving swiftly the administration request for P500 million for the evacuation of all the more than 30,000 OFWs in Lebanon.

“My personal take is that this can easily be approved in the House once members are satisfied that Owwa funds have been depleted,” said Nograles.

Rep. Joey Salceda revealed on Monday the request for the emergency supplementary budget for the evacuation of all Filipinos in Lebanon amid fears of an escalation of violence there following a 48-hour ceasefire.

Also yesterday, Vice President Noli de Castro called a meeting to draw up contingency plans for the mass evacuation of the OFWs in Lebanon. De Castro was named by the President to head a task force to oversee the crisis.

Senators unhappy

Senators invited to the closed-door meeting expressed dissatisfaction at the briefing. Asked if he was satisfied with what was being done in Lebanon, Sen. Ralph Recto said, “Ah, no. Definitely not enough.”

“Their first response is to bring them to the north from the south. If the war escalates, then definitely you have to bring home as many as you can so the government should prepare P2.7 billion for that purpose,” Recto said.

“I did express the concern that there might be an offensive, that the situation on the ground is changing very fast so they must prepare for their evacuation,” said Sen. Richard Gordon.

Gordon said there was an “apparent lack of a cogent and efficient communication system of disseminating instructions to all Filipinos in Lebanon.” *With a report from Michael Lim Ubac, Cynthia D. Balana and Christine O. Avendaño*

For first time, gov’t PAL plane for evac

By Nikko Dizon

A RETURNEE from Lebanon, Ros
together by strumming her guita
Lebanon. Esito arrived in Manila c

FOR THE FIRST TIME SINCE the evacuation of Filipino workers out of Lebanon began more than a week ago, the government chartered a Philippine Air Lines aircraft to fly nearly 300 OFWs out of Lebanon.

The chartered PAL flight cost $300,000 (P15,486,000), according to Angelo Jimenez, deputy administrator of the Overseas Workers Welfare Administration. Owwa paid for the flight.

PR 009 with 295 OFWs on board was expected to arrive at 7 p.m. last night at the Ninoy Aquino International Airport (Naia) Centennial Terminal.

Asked why it took a week for Owwa to charter a PAL plane, Jimenez explained that the government wanted to evacuate the OFWs out of Lebanon as fast as it could.

“The commercial flights (taken by the OFWs) were already operating within the region and it was faster to book their seats there,” Jimenez said.

“To charter a flight, we still had to set up the system, the paper work, etc.,” he said.

PAL does not have flights to the Middle East and Europe.

1,450 OFW arrivals so far

Jimenez said that with the arrival of an estimated 1,450 returnees since July 23, including the 72 OFWs who flew in yesterday afternoon, there could be fewer Filipinos to be evacuated out of Lebanon, referring to those who had volunteered to be flown out.

He said these OFWs were staying at the Church of the Miraculous Medal in Beirut that had served as the fleeing Filipinos’ relocation center since the war between Israel and Hezbollah militants in Southern Lebanon broke out nearly three weeks ago.

Jimenez, who oversees Owwa’s repatriation assistance division, said it would be virtually impossible to evacuate all OFWs from Lebanon.

“Evacuate everybody? How? What if the OFW doesn’t want to leave?” Jimenez said.

He said that while many OFWs wanted to go back to the Philippines, many others were also expected to stick it out and take their chances there.

Nevertheless, he added, the government would continue with its preparation to evacuate all those who would want to leave.

The 72 Filipino workers, along with a young boy who was snappy in a tuxedo, was the 20th batch of returnees.

They arrived at the Naia Terminal 1 via Qatar Airways flight QR646 at 2:15 p.m.

Several of them, including Rhea Villarosa and Josephine Publico, were profuse in praising the labor and embassy officials in Beirut and Damascus, Syria, for their dedication to their jobs.

“They were so patient with us. We want to thank them,” Villarosa said.

Publico said she and her companions had heard of the controversy generated by the supposed Owwa fund mess but said what was important to them was that the Owwa had gotten them safely back to the Philippines.

Marcelina Toledo, 28, agreed with her colleagues. She was among those who stood out in the group as she lugged a huge box containing an electronic keyboard.

Birthday gift

“It’s my employer’s birthday gift to my daughter,” Toledo told the INQUIRER. Toledo’s daughter, Maries, turns 5 years old on Sept. 7.

With two young boys of her own, Toledo’s employer instantly developed a soft spot for Maries.

“She asked me what I wanted my daughter to have for her birthday, and since Maries likes to sing, I told her a keyboard might be a nice gift,” Toledo said in Filipino.

Toledo’s two-year contract was ending in October but her employer allowed her to return to her hometown of Roxas, Isabela, to escape the war. Her employer even brought her to the Church of the Miraculous Medal. Toledo said her employer herself

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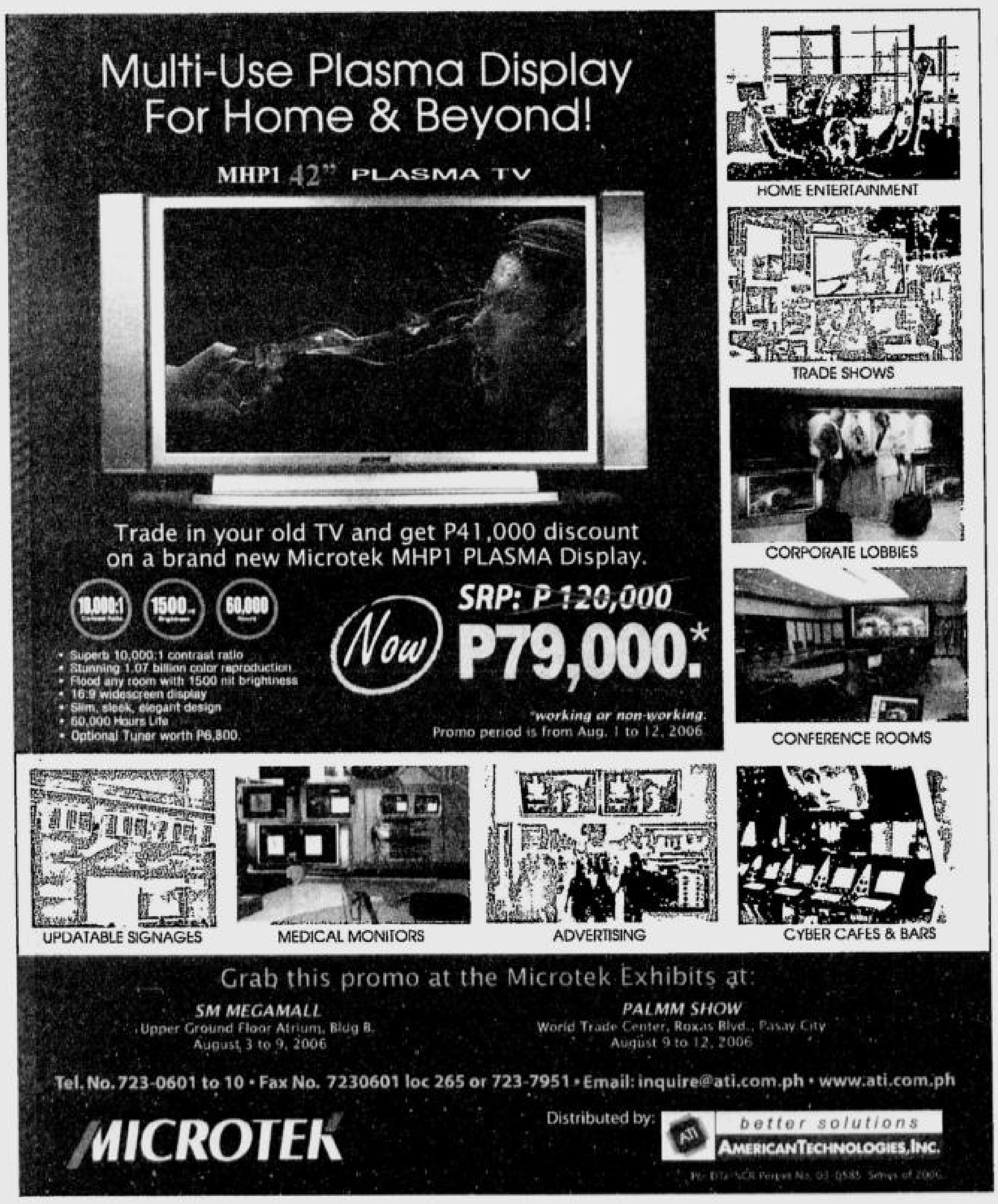

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GMA defies doctors’ orders sneaks out of Palace

From page A1

and left Malacañang Monday evening to attend the birthday party of Brig. Gen. Delfin Bangit, her former chief bodyguard.

Under a drizzle, Ms Arroyo’s vehicle convoy left the main gate of the Malacañang compound at a little after 7 p.m. to go to the Presidential Security Group (PSG) compound, a five-minute ride from the Palace.

Ms Arroyo’s doctors had ordered her not to venture out in the rain and to limit her engagements to between 10 a.m. and 3 p.m., within the safe confines of Malacañang.

But the source, a member of the Cabinet who asked not to be named for obvious reasons, said the President stayed only up to 8:30 p.m. at Bangit’s party.

She ate some of the food served, shook hands with the guests, and engaged in small talk, the source said.

Bangit, who served as PSG head for three years, was recently promoted by Ms Arroyo deputy division commander of the 2nd Infantry Division in Camp Capinpin, Tanay, Rizal.

Camp Capinpin is the detention site of Brig. Gen. Danilo Lim and other alleged conspirators in the purported coup plot of Feb. 24.

The camp lies across from the vacation estate of ousted President Joseph Estrada, where he is being held under house arrest.

Nonessentials

Earlier on Monday, the President appeared to have taken her doctors’ orders to heart by limiting her schedule to a single engagement—a Cabinet meeting in the morning.

Press Secretary Ignacio Bunye yesterday reaffirmed Ms Arroyo’s commitment to rest by cutting back on the “nonessentials.”

“The President herself has vowed to cut down on her workload and follow a more balanced schedule at the advice of her physicians, and that is all there is to it,” he said.

Bunye also announced that Ms Arroyo would resume her provincial sorties with a visit to Cebu on Aug. 11-12 to attend the 10th Apec Business Advisory Council meeting.

Reacting to insinuations by the opposition that Ms Arroyo’s condition was more serious than had been announced, Bunye said: “The medical bulletins speak for themselves and there is nothing beneath or beyond the findings on President Arroyo’s health condition, which was a simple case of flu.

“The opposition should not twist the findings and advice of competent medical professionals to suit their anti-Gloria propaganda campaign. And like the President, they should be more concerned with the health and well-being of the people rather than their self-serving agenda.”

Between the opposition, which is claiming that Ms Arroyo is suffering from a liver ailment, and medical experts, the public should “believe her doctors more,” Bunye said.

State of the nation

Former President Fidel Ramos said Malacañang, the health secretary, as well as the doctors of Ms Arroyo should regularly report to the public on the true state of her health in order to quell speculations.

“The state of the health of the President is part of the state of the nation,” Ramos said in a press conference yester-

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alee Esito, says she kept herself during the bombing of n Monday. JESS YUSON

was set to leave for Canada.

Also yesterday, the US-funded International Organization for Migration announced it would begin an airlift of 1,350 Filipinos from Lebanon. The first flight carrying 450 evacuees was due to arrive before dawn today.

Two more IOM-chartered Boeing 747 aircraft are scheduled to fly some 900 evacuees to Manila on Aug. 4 and 6, with the government-ordered pullout of OFWs particularly from southern Lebanon reaching its third week.

The IOM regional office in Makati City said around 12,000 nationals from the Philippines and 22 other countries still need to be evacuated either from Lebanon or from neighboring Syria.

The group's assistance includes arranging road trips—in a convoy of five to six buses—for OFWs who have been booked for the humanitarian flights, from their evacuation site in Beirut to Damascus, Syria, where the planes await them.

The Department of Foreign Affairs had made the formal request for assistance to the IOM headquarters in Geneva, Fernandez told the INQUIRER yesterday.

2 injured

Also yesterday, Labor Secretary Arturo Brion said two Filipino women were seriously injured after they jumped off buildings in Beirut last week in their haste to join the evacuation. They were identified as Elna Ligoy, 21, of Davao Oriental, and Vanessa Batulan, 20, of General Santos City. They were reported to be in stable condition after medical treatment. *With reports from Volt Contreras and Christine O. Avendano*

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his office in Makati City.
said there was a constitutional
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ng/ losing weight?

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every time, everywhere," he said,
that it was likewise the duty of the
secretary to explain to the people
e state of the President's health in
's terms.
ne observation that Ms Arroyo was
weight, Ramos said this was not
ficant as losing weight.
dded: "If someone is sick, we
wish him/her well instead of spec-
". *With a report from Cynthia D.*

Finally, RP embassy receives money

From page A1

was pegged at $121,369.89 as of July 26, the same day that Bichara wrote his letter of apology for causing inconvenience or embarrassment to the government when he claimed that the state had no money for the evacuation.

Release approved

Conejos said that the DFA immediately approved the release of $150,000 to the Beirut embassy on July 27 with Seguis and Bichara agreeing on how the money would be brought to Lebanon.

He said the DFA would have sent the money through the Citibank account in Beirut but since the war broke out, the Lebanese central bank slapped a 9-percent penalty on dollar withdrawals over $25,000.

Conejos said that he was pointing out this money trail not to show that Bichara was exaggerating on his embassy's financial predicament but only "to lay down the facts."

PhilHealth cards

In the same briefing, Overseas Workers Welfare Administration chief Marianito Roque debunked allegations Ms Arroyo had authorized the transfer of Owwa funds to the Philippine Health Insurance Corp. for the purchase of PhilHealth cards that were reportedly distributed in the 2004 elections to boost her reelection chances.

Roque said Owwa did transfer P530 million to PhilHealth but this was in March 2005 and the money was used to facilitate the shift of the OFWs' health insurance program from Medicare to PhilHealth.

Health Secretary Francisco Duque III confirmed Roque's statement.

Duque said that he would resign if there was evidence that would substantiate allegations in the Senate that the PhilHealth cards were distributed in the 2004 election. *With a report from Tina G. Santos*

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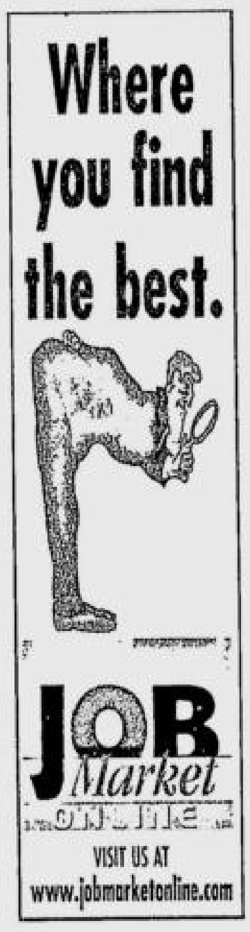

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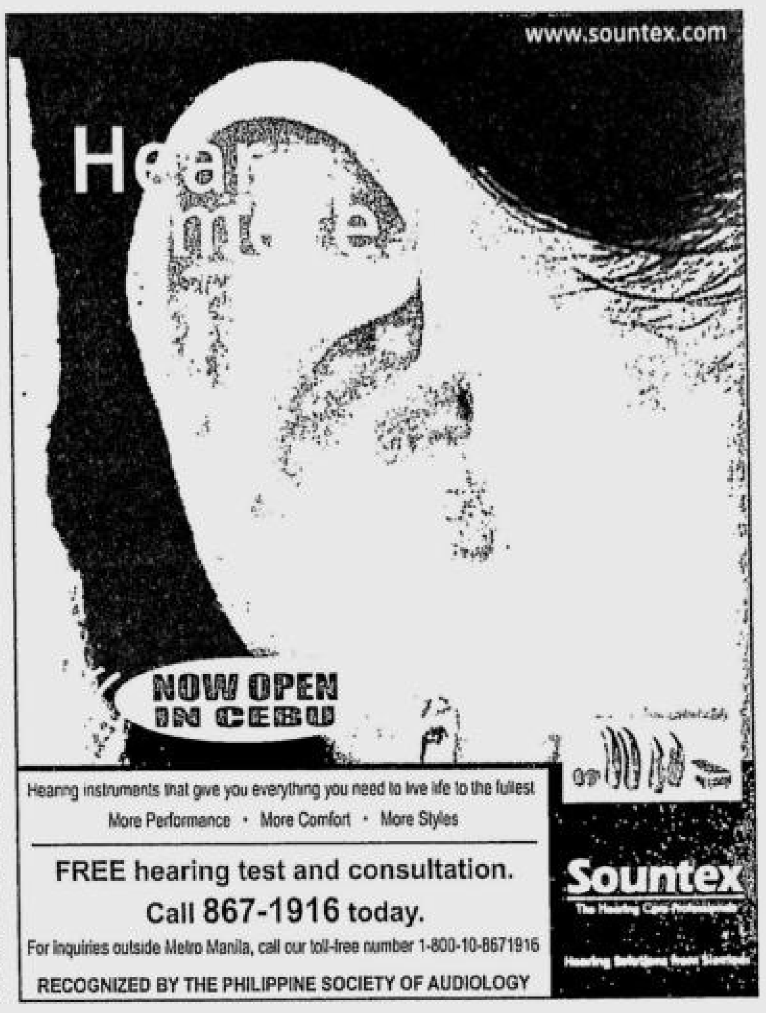

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Silence

EDITORIAL

CONTINUED DEFIANCE. THAT IS THE POSTURE OF Israel in the face of mounting condemnation by the international community of its attacks on Lebanon.

An Israeli air strike on the southern Lebanese village of Qana early hours last Sunday killed at least 54 Lebanese civilians, most of them children. This forced Israel to show some signs of remorse by calling for an investigation. But instead of added pressure from its major allies, especially the United States, Israel discovered it still enjoyed some breathing room.

The United States sent mixed signals on exerting pressure on Israel to pull back from the brink. An emergency meeting of the United Nations Security Council issued a statement calling for a ceasefire, but dropped the word "immediate" because of US opposition. "There is strong prima facie evidence that both [sides] have committed grave breaches of international humanitarian law," UN Secretary General Kofi Annan said last Sunday, trying to stiffen up the UN statement.

US Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice, prior to her departure from Israel last Monday, did squeeze out a pledge from Prime Minister Ehud Olmert to suspend air strikes across Lebanon for 48 hours. This would allow for an investigation into the Qana bombing and for Lebanese civilians to flee toward the north. But the Israeli air force resumed air strikes in Lebanon within hours of the announcement, continuing to target suspected Hezbollah positions that same day.

The Israeli cabinet has announced that upon the expiration of the 48-hour "ceasefire," it will widen its ground offensive. More reservists have been called to duty. An air assault that has proceeded practically uninterrupted will be supported by an expanded land operation. This, in turn, will surely lead to an escalation in air offensives, which have been the principal cause of civilian casualties.

Lebanese Prime Minister Fouad Siniora refused to meet Rice because the United States wasn't calling for an immediate ceasefire. The United States and United Kingdom have continued to stubbornly resist calls for such a ceasefire, insisting on an "urgent" or "sustainable" ceasefire to take place "as soon as possible." The rest of the world wants an "immediate" ceasefire, and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations has added its collective voice to the call.

A Hezbollah member of the Lebanese parliament, Hassan Fadlallah, has said: "The cabinet, the resistance and the people are united on their stand. Stopping the Israeli aggression is the priority. There is no other discussion, there is no negotiation concerning any other issues. When the Israeli aggression stops, we can then discuss other political issues."

The US proposal, such as it is, was explained by Rice who said its aims are threefold: "A ceasefire, the political principles that provide for a long-term settlement, and the authorization of an international force to support the Lebanese army in keeping the peace. We are working simultaneously on all three tracks so that a ceasefire can be supported by the deployment of an international stabilization force as soon as possible after Security Council action." The plan, acceptable in principle to many countries, continues to be bogged down over the question of whether to call a ceasefire now or later.

There is an irony here. Seventy years ago, the Spanish Civil War erupted. It helped usher in the era of modern air power, and was marked by the first terror bombing by aircraft of a civilian town. The destruction of the town of Guernica by Stuka dive-bombers sent by Nazi Germany in support of the fascist rebels in Spain was an international outrage. It inspired Pablo Picasso to paint his famous anti-war masterpiece named after the destroyed town.

In that conflict, the United States also dragged its feet along with the United Kingdom, always holding back from either intervening forcefully for peace or for the beleaguered, legitimate, Spanish republic's government. Fascism won then.

Today, Lebanon bleeds, and its people, including many children, are dying. Around 700,000 Lebanese have become refugees, the gains and reconstruction of a decade ground back into dust.

And where's the voice of the Philippines? It is only echoed in the calls of the Asean, but not engaged on its own. Our country seems barely competent in evacuating our people and too cowardly to speak out for genuine peace and an immediate end to conflict. This is not even mendicant behavior. It is one that is completely devoid of principle.

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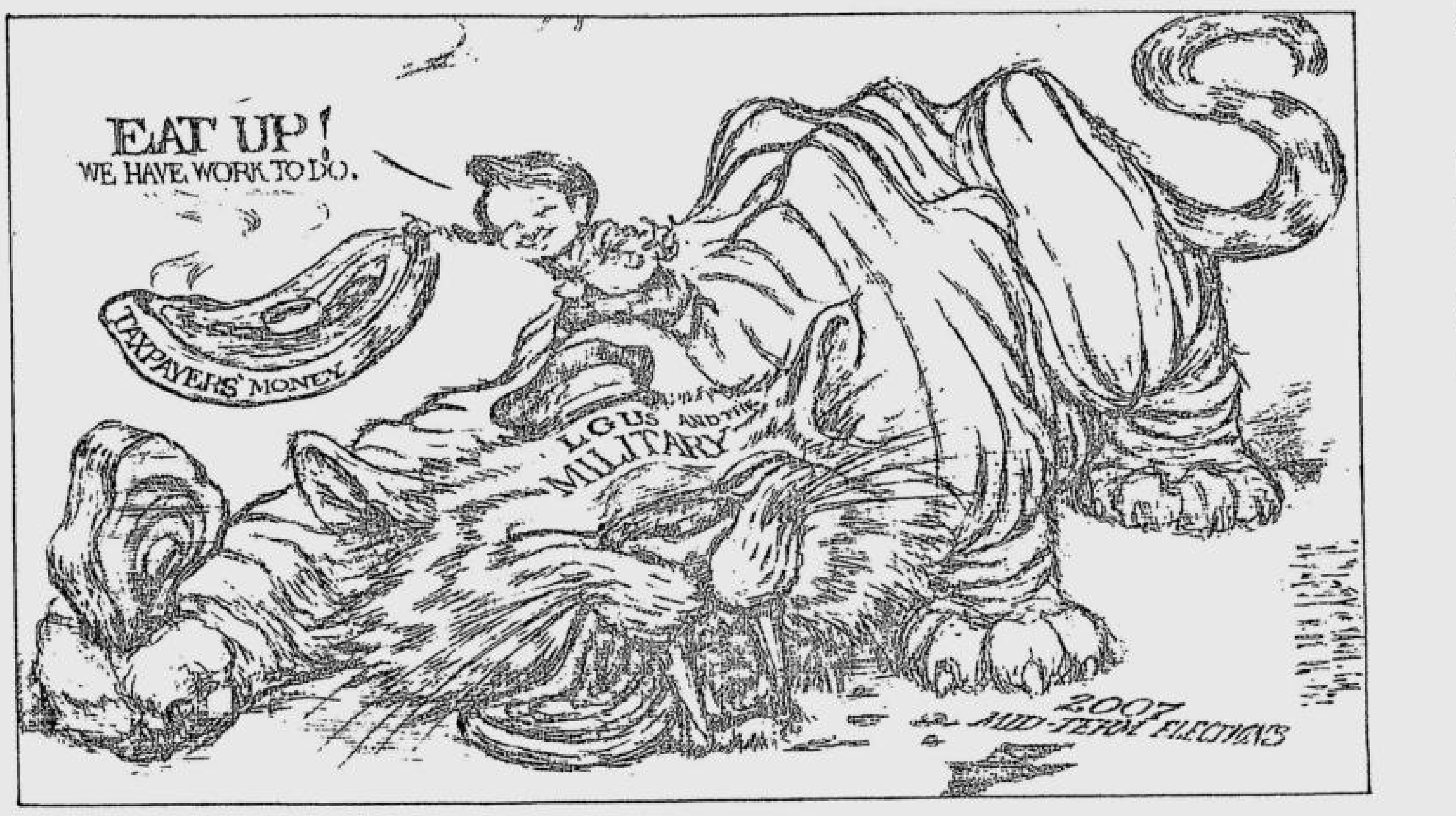


Owwa fund is trust fund only for members

AS I SEE IT

Neal H. Cruz

WHEN YOU THROW A PIECE OF MEAT TO several dogs, they will fight over it. That's what's happening now to the Philippine Embassy in Lebanon, the Overseas Workers Welfare Administration (Owwa) and Malacañang. They are fighting over money needed to evacuate the Filipino workers in Lebanon. That always happens when there is money involved. And there is plenty of money, P8 billion of it, in the Owwa fund.

Do you know the object of the fight? The rebate given by airlines to agents.

If you charter a plane or buy thousands of airline tickets for the evacuees, do you know how much is the rebate? Enough to make the person buying the tickets a multi-millionaire.

But do you know that spending the Owwa fund for the evacuation is illegal? According to a former Department of Labor official who was among those who set up the Owwa fund, the money contributed by the workers is a trust fund intended only for the welfare of the workers, something similar to the retirement funds in the Government Service Insurance System and the Social Security System.

For emergency situations like the present crisis in Lebanon, the Migrant Workers Act provides for a budget precisely for an evacuation. There is an undersecretary for migrant workers in the Department of Foreign Affairs. That is his job.

The Owwa fund is only for Owwa members who paid the contributions, in the same way that only members can get anything from the GSIS or the SSS. But a big number of Filipino evacuees for which the Owwa fund has been spent are illegal workers in Lebanon who did not contribute to it and are therefore not Owwa members. Money being spent for them should come from the DFA budget, as the Migrant Workers Act provides.

* * *

Meralco had a letter in the July 28 column denying any shady dealings with Duracom. But the letter only implicitly confirmed that Duracom has had three increases in its pricing formula within the last three years. Meralco seemed to seek comfort in hiding behind the fact that Duracom's contract and all subsequent amendments had all been approved by the Energy Regulatory Commission (ERC).

Duracom started with a rate pegged at 5 percent lower than the Napocor rate in 1998. Contrary to its pricing debut, however, that pricing formula has steadily increased through the years and is now being hitched to WESM prices. Based on Duracom's 2004 and 2005 annual reports to the Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC), its selling price has steadily increased from P3.79/kWh in 2003, to P4.58 in 2004 and to P5.35 in 2005. More recent adjustments have put the price close to P7.50/kWh. However, since the start of WESM, Duracom has been linked to the peak hourly market pricing which, during the period from June 26 to July 24, 2006, reached an outrageous P19.79939/kWh! Why did the ERC allow such repeated upward amendments in the price?

On Nov. 22, 2004, the ERC directed Meralco and Duracom "to renegotiate the pricing scheme of the contract, taking into consideration Duracom's true cost as an embedded generator" and further required that the renegotiated contract "be submitted to the Commission for approval within one year from issuance of this Decision." Why did the ERC practically command Meralco and Duracom to renegotiate and raise the price at a time of overcapacity?

These rate increases were happening at a time when there was tremendous overcapacity in Luzon and a special IPP renegotiation committee formed by the government was mandating all utilities and Napocor to renegotiate all power supply contracts to bring costs down for the consumer. Why was the ERC giving Duracom such first-class treatment?

Within two months from the filing of Meralco's first application for amendment of its supply agreement with Duracom, a provisional authority for the increase was approved. This is a stark contrast to applications of other distribution utilities, seeking to provide relief to their respective IPPs, which took at least 12 months to be approved, as Transco has repeatedly complained.

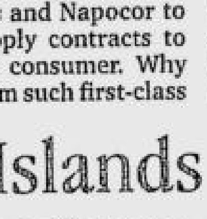
This confirms a point raised in this column that with Sunny Sun a deal is never what it originally seems to be. He has the knack for renegotiating more favorable terms on an already signed contract. It may just be coincidence, but people may find it interesting to note that all three increases happened at a time when Jesus Alcordo, Sun's close friend and business partner, was ERC commissioner. With Alcordo's retirement, there is talk that the group is lobbying to get Alcordo's former right hand man at East Asia and Napocor to replace him in the ERC.

Meralco claims not to be privy to the so-called 21-25 centavos/kWh "marketing fees" flowing to Sun's holding company YNN Holdings Corp. from the operating costs of Duracom and East Asia Diesel Power Corp. Really?

Talk of this arrangement started when creditors of both firms were heard complaining of an extraordinary expense item in both firms' books that get paid regardless of whether their loans are repaid or not. The second largest annual expense of Duracom and East Asia, next only to fuel, is an item called "marketing fees," amounting to almost P250 million a year. The item is treated as a preferred dividend that is paid to YNN Holdings Corp. before any loans are paid to creditors.

Where do these "marketing fees" go? No one in the power industry sets aside marketing expenses for a power plant. It's stupid to imagine that with astute marketing and advertising, power plant owners can entice consumers to buy their electricity. In the context of the power industry such fees only connote one thing: an institutionalized grease fund.

Ladrones Islands



THERE'S THE RUB

Conrado de Quiros

I'M GLAD THE PROFESSIONAL REGULATION Commission has finally listened to reason and agreed to suspend the oath-taking of nurses who "passed" the last nursing exams. The various colleges of nursing, not least the University of Santo Tomas which has been at the forefront of the protest, have been calling for the results of the exams to be voided and for the candidates to take them all over again.

What happened, for the benefit of those who did not follow the story, was that a good portion of the exam questions was leaked to a good portion of the examinees. How good a portion of the questions and of the examinees the PRC and the officials of the various nursing schools have some idea, but they do not know for sure. Initially, to try to solve the problem, the PRC hired a statistician to gauge the extent of the harm done by the leaked answers and to propose a way to circumvent it. Acting on his findings and recommendations, the PRC ruled to invalidate 25 questions in Test III (Medical Surgical Nursing) and the entire last category, Test V (Psychiatric Nursing). Those who passed the exam, minus those parts, were to be given their licenses as nurses this Aug. 22.

The leak came from R.A. Gapuz Review Center, which admitted that it gave its reviewers a document containing many of the questions in the exams. Ray Gapuz, founder of the center and a UST graduate (to the chagrin of UST officials), would explain later that it was an honest mistake. The questions were faxed to them by a source, and they distributed them to their students thinking they were review material. It was their policy to exchange review materials with contacts.

In a letter to the PRC, Susan Maravilla, Thelma Abelardo and Rene Tadle, UST assistant dean, treasurer of the UST Nursing Alumni Association, and president of UST Faculty Association of the College of Nursing, respectively, refuted the PRC's position. At the very least, they said, how did the PRC determine that only 25 questions in Test III and all the ones in Test V were leaked? At the very most, they said, even if that were so, why pass candidates whom you had no way of knowing were competent in surgical and psychiatric nursing?

The laws of the country call on the state "to ensure that the medical profession is not infiltrated by incompetents to whom patients may unwarily entrust their lives and health." The UST officials added that they were aware of the cost in time, money and energy taking the exam would be for the innocent, but they were also aware of the even more humongous cost in reputation, credibility and employability of those who would pass under these terms. The cloud of doubt cast on their competence by these flawed exams would hound them forever.

I agree with the UST officials' position completely. I myself can understand the dismay of those who honestly and diligently prepared for the exams. At the very least, I can understand the added expense it will mean for them in these dire times. More so as those who take up nursing often come from families of modest means who dream of being able to pluck out self and kin from this pass someday. But the UST officials are right: The cost of their not taking the exams again is far steeper. Not just for themselves but for the nation as well. It won't just damage their reputations—hospital patients might wish to inquire if they were being nursed by someone from Batch 2006—it will damage the reputation of the whole profession. Even New York, a city that is not likely to set much store by psychiatric nursing as its residents are well past being cured in that respect, may decide to recruit elsewhere.

I understand that some of the examinees have expressed their willingness to go through the exams again for that very reason. I heartily applaud them. The bitterness of the frustrated is better directed at the R.A. Gapuz Review Center whose "lapse in judgment" excuse is inexcusable. The more credible explanation for its lack of scrupulousness in scrutinizing the document passed on to it was its desire to increase enrollment by showing the world it had a great batting average in producing successful examinees. The frustrated should have their reckoning with the review center.

But more than that, I agree with the UST officials' position because of one urgent and compelling thing. Which is that it's time we stopped cheating in this country. Which is that it's time we punished the guilty even if we cannot altogether reward the innocent. Which is that it's time we stopped becoming an out-and-out Ladrones Island, a den of thieves and malefactors, a snake pit of liars and cheaters.

Richly ironically, Prospero Pichay, who should be the last person to want to draw attention to cheating, has demanded that an inquiry be made immediately about the exams. He thundered: "We have been banking on our medical practitioners to be one of our greatest assets in competing in the global market, but the issue now casts doubt on their very competency."

But my dear Prospero, don't we have the same thing in the very heart of government? Have you bothered to ask yourself why cheating and lying riot more plentifully and violently these days than the inmates of Muntinlupa? You want to investigate, investigate the conduct of the last elections, not the nursing exams. The possibility of incompetent nurses can only affect our health and reputation, the reality of an illegitimate President affects our life and our children's future. To paraphrase you: We have been banking on democracy as our greatest asset in being taken seriously by the community of nations, but the issue of a usurper now casts doubt on our very existence.

Happily, the PRC has ruled to suspend acknowledging the results of the last nursing exams. Now, if we can only do that to the last elections.

Who pays the bill?

ANALYSIS

Amando Doronila

(Last of three parts)

A WEEK FOLLOWING THE DELIVERY OF THE 2006 State of the Nation Address, we have descended to the ground after taking a flight of fancy to Xanadu (aided by Malacañang optics or opiates) in the form of four "super regions" that would jump-start the country's economy into "First World status" within a record time of three and a half years.

This swift return to economic reality is the good news about the Sona. It came after crunching numbers on the economic costs of the package.

At first glance, the Sona architects cannot be faulted for want of imagination. The Sona redrew graphically the economic map by creating four platforms of growth from the northern to the southernmost tips of the country: (1) an agri-business belt spanning northern and central Luzon and northern Mindanao; (2) a tourism belt in the Visayas; (3) the industrial heartland running from Clark and Subic across Metro Manila extending to Calabarzon down to Batangas; and (4) a "cyber corridor," an IT zone that includes Baguio and Davao.

Although these growth areas overlap, each region has a piece of the big cake. No one is left out. But looking at the economic-geographic map from another perspective, the Sona is at once a pitch for federalism defined by economic specialization; and for the slogan, "It's time to return the power to the people and the provinces," ending the dominance of "Imperial Manila," historically the graveyard of many presidential ambitions, especially of incumbents.

This Sona comes as the most ambitious ever in recent memory, in terms of its time frame, targets, scale of financing, as well as its political objectives, and availability of resource support. It was proposed by an administration that has enjoyed the lowest popularity rating since the 1980s, a serious political handicap for launching expansive projects.

The Sona attempts to shoot down too many birds with one missile. With this return to reality, sensible questions are being asked, not for the purpose of heckling, about the costs of the programs, about the sources of financing and whether there's money in the treasury to bankroll the projects.

The shift of the Sona debate from knee-jerk reaction to cost-benefit issues is salutary. For this assessment, the public profits from the hard-nosed commentaries of independent economists, not from meddlesome bishops, whose post-Sona homilies have not at all advanced our knowledge of the economic implications of the document. The cause of human knowledge is better served by experts and specialists, not by well-intentioned people whose competency lies in disciplines that are not very respectful of scientific methods of inquiry.

President Macapagal-Arroyo unveiled a Sona package that didn't carry a price tag and with scant reference to sources of funding. She spoke of P1 billion to fight corruption, to be matched by another P1 billion from savings. "We have funds for constitutional and electoral changes," she says. "We have the funds to stamp out terrorism and lawless violence... now we can fund the Medium Term Public Investment Program."

The academic community raised two important issues: (1) the time frame of the programs; and (2) the costs. For example, Raul Fabella, dean of the University of the Philippines School of Economics, said he doubted that the President has enough time to complete the Sona projects in three and a half years. He said contracts have to be signed and environmental issues have to be resolved before the first bag of cement is poured. He said the President should have focused on priority projects. Benjamin Diokno, the budget secretary of former President Joseph Estrada, estimated that the government needed to raise P500 million to implement the projects and doubted if it could raise the amount.

Soceioeconomic Planning Secretary Romulo Neri was unprepared with details of the plans, saying the government "has still to finalize the list of projects." Finance Secretary Margarito Teves said the question of funding is "still pending."

Gaps on details followed days after the Sona from administration minions. Albay Rep. Joey Salceda, chair of the House appropriations committee and a presidential economic adviser, estimated the cost at P1.02 trillion, but said the government could easily come up with the money. But Budget Secretary Rolando Andaya Jr. was not sure how the money would be raised, saying only that part of it would come from government corporations. Salceda said the money would be sourced from the budget, government-owned and-controlled corporations, and the private sector, but assured there would be no new taxes. Teves hinted at foreign borrowing.

Giving further details, Executive Secretary Eduardo Ermita said P74 billion could come from the national budget, P96 billion from state corporations and P37 billion from the private sector, with the balance coming from local government units. Ermita said the government would spend P11.6 billion this year, to kick-start the "big ticket" infrastructure projects. Given the mid-term election next year, spending priority on what projects or in what regions is the key to where patronage will be poured in the first three years to win a new electoral mandate.

The question of the impact of the Sona on such issues as social equity and poverty is likely to take a back seat in the next 12 months to pump-priming for short-term political objectives. Whatever boost the economy will receive from this spending spree is likely to be incidental.

Clearly, with the Sona, the President has launched a crash program of development that could end in a crash landing.

Watching 'Philippine Idol'

AT LARGE

Rina Jimenez-David

MY FAVORITE EPISODES OF "AMERICAN IDOL" are really the first few shows that dwell on the auditions among thousands of wannabe pop music stars—and a number of crackpots who really just want to enjoy their 15 minutes (or less) of fame.

There's more drama, humor, pathos, jubilation and frustration in these first few shows than in an entire season of primetime sitcoms or even *telenovelas*.

This is why when the inaugural episode of "Philippine Idol," the local edition of "AI," aired last Sunday, I felt a quibble of apprehension. Would "PI" be as successful as its more famous predecessors? How would our homegrown talents fare? And would our local judges prove as credible and discriminating, as well as amusing and empathetic, as their more famous counterparts?

Well, I'm happy to report that "PI," judging from the initial airing, more than holds its own against all the other versions of the show, particularly "AI" which dominates the ratings on American TV. All the elements we've come to anticipate in the first episodes of "AI" were present in the opening show of "PI." It certainly didn't lack for evidence of the talented (which was only expected) as well as the totally clueless and inept.

Providing much of the comic quota were the aspirants who came to the auditions with little more than an unshakeable belief in their singing talent and in their destiny that would, they believe, lead them to stardom.

They proved that there was nothing they weren't willing to do to create an impact—from wearing outlandish outfits, to dancing up a storm, to literally begging on their knees for another chance.

* * *

I WAS enjoying myself too much to take down notes, but here are a few characters in the PICC auditions who managed to make their mark.

The guy with an Afro hairdo at first seemed to have doomed his chances when he heralded his entrance with a blast from a trumpet and a manic display of bravado. But his energy and verve managed to win over judges Pilita Corrales and Francis Magalona, who thought it would be "interesting" to see him making his way to the finals. He's one character we'll certainly look out for.

The "stage mother" and her daughter with a hearing impairment provided the requisite emotional quota, and it was certainly moving when the judges acknowledged the girl's talent by giving her the "golden ticket."

The producers even managed to wring a love story from the first audition, in the persons of a lounge singer and her foreigner boyfriend. I also enjoyed the performance of the "Am-boy," who typical of Amerasian children said he wanted to do well so that his absent father would recognize him. He was certainly impressive with his interpretation of a Gary V classic. Also to look out for is the young Valle Verde resident who, with his good looks and soulful singing, earned—from my daughter and I at least—the title of "Philippine Idol's Ace Young."

While I didn't give the young woman in an "animé-inspired" costume much of a chance, she proved to have a surprisingly strong voice. But she should get rid of her animé hang-up really fast. When Mr. C asked if she could sing a "normal" song after she belted the "Voltes V" theme, she sang a slower-paced number that—so my daughter told me—was still an animé standard.

* * *

A BIG part of any "Idol" show are the judges, and the "PI" jurors did not disappoint. I don't know if the local producers had a "formula" in mind, but the three had much the same elements that make the "AI" judges celebrities in their own right. Ryan Cayabyab proved he shared Simon Cowell's exacting standards and sharp ear, though he was far less acerbic in his comments.

Corrales is as charming and energetic as Paula Abdul, but far less gullible, though she does have difficulty masking her emotions. Francis M gives the panel the "cool factor" that Randy Jackson tries so hard to exude, and injects a needed youthful energy.

What "PI" proves, I think, is the success of the format, which follows a basic structure while avoiding predictability through canny editing and choice of subjects. I just wish the spiels of host Ryan Agoncillo were more cleverly written and less prosaic, and he really should do something with his hair!

* * *

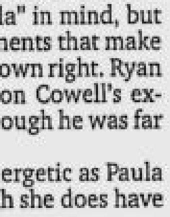
IN CELEBRATION of "World Breastfeeding Week" this year, Children for Breastfeeding Inc. invites the public to a series of activities to revive and promote the practice of breastfeeding in this country. Indeed, it seems a major scandal that 20 years after the enactment of the National Breastfeeding Code, meant to regulate the marketing practices of multinational infant formula manufacturers while encouraging Filipino mothers to breastfeed their children, the rates of breastfeeding here have been falling dramatically, putting babies at risk.

The local celebration of "World Breastfeeding Week" reels off tomorrow at 9 a.m. at the City State Tower Hotel, with a "Media Orientation on Breastfeeding and Early Child Care and Development." Among the speakers are Dr. Elvira Henares-Esguerra who will talk on "Bringing Back the Breastfeeding Culture," while lawyer Nona Andaya-Castillo will speak on "Breastfeeding and Human Rights."

On the same afternoon, the Breastfeeding Station of the SM Mall of Asia will also be blessed and, later, speakers will be delivering lectures and taking questions on aspects of breastfeeding. One intriguing topic is "Beauty and Breastfeeding" with Nuriza Bungubung, a former beauty titleholder, as speaker.

Other activities planned for World Breastfeeding Week is a Candle-lighting Ceremony to be led by Makati Mayor Jejomar Binay, and the launching on Aug. 14 of the revised Implementing Rules and Regulations of the Breastfeeding Law in Malacañang with President Macapagal-Arroyo in attendance.

'Better to fall than accept foreign rule'



LOOKING BACK

Ambeth R. Ocampo

SOMEONE ASKED ME RECENTLY WHY THE late Ferdinand Marcos was a great admirer of Antonio Luna, brother of the famous painter, friend of Jose Rizal, general during the Filipino-American War. My first reaction was that maybe this was because of Ilocano pride since "Apo Marcos" was the famous "Anac ti Batac," a son of Batac, Ilocos Norte, like Artemio Ricarte, and Luna, although he was born in Binondo and signed himself in La Solidaridad as "Taga-ilog," came from a family that traced its roots to another Ilocos town, Badoc.

The late Teodoro Agoncillo told me that one time, he and Marcos were sitting in the presidential study in Malacañang when the President turned and pointed to a bust of Antonio Luna. "This is the greatest general of the revolution," Marcos said. "He is a distant relation of mine." Agoncillo snorted and said under his breath, "Well, that's your misfortune."

As he told me this anecdote, Agoncillo declared that "Luna was the greatest general of the Filipino-American War who did not win a single battle." Obviously, he wanted me to ask why. And when the dutiful disciple did as expected, we spent a whole afternoon discussing Luna and Apolinario Mabini.

Ever since that time, I have picked up anything and everything on these two heroes who always pale in comparison because of the overemphasis on Rizal. I keep promising to write a book about these two men, who for me were the true and living conscience of the Revolution.

Fortunately, there are a lot of materials on Antonio Luna, both autobiographical and those based on the recollections of his contemporaries. What is more important is that he gave interviews like the one published in the May 20, 1899 issue of La Independencia that gives us the flavor of his conversation and the sharpness of his convictions. I share an English translation here by J.R.M. Taylor:

Q: At the present time, there is a considerable amount of talk about the autonomy offered by the American Commission. What do you say about it? What line of conduct do you propose to follow? Do you think the people will choose it?

A: So far I have not even thought of reading or studying the principles of the autonomy. The Filipino nation seeks its independence. I will sustain the cause of my country until the very end in compliance with the oath I made to my flag.

Without exaggeration or exaltation I sincerely confess to you that it is always better to fall on the field of battle than to accept any foreign rule. I said so before the war and repeat it now.

All of the generals with whom I have had communication—Tinio, Macabulos, Concepcion, Mascardo, Pilar and Torres—are of the same opinion. Those of the south are still more decided. The military together with the civil party, will not deliver their arms or accept autonomy. I have profound convictions of what I say, since in a kind of plebiscite I have asked people whether they wanted autonomy. Do you know what they answered me? "Long Live Independence! May autonomy die!" Those were the answers I received in eight of the central provinces I addressed. On repeated occasions I asked the entire population of towns who were fleeing from the enemy, "Are you discouraged? Do you want peace? Do you wish to return to your pueblos?"

And they—women, old men and children—would answer: "We have started to fight for our independence, we will continue, we will lose all before we will live under the domination of those who humble and destroy us."

Q: It has been said that the army is already discouraged in the struggle, has this any truth?

A: They say they are discouraged? I do not think they are able to prove it. From the 23rd of April until the fourth of [May 1899] when I was forced, although with sorrow, to abandon them, my troops fought with an enthusiasm which I admire, I have had the fifth part of my leaders and officers wounded, two majors and five officers killed (this is an exact statement). However, I ask them if they are discouraged.

In Mexico, Dolores and in Calulut after Pulilan, Bagbag, Kalumpit and Apalit, I think the enemy must have been convinced that we were firmly decided as ever to resist. After the resistance at Santo Tomas where the soldiers met a bayonet charge with naked breasts, can the contrary be affirmed? When I retired wounded at half past two, we were in front of the station of that town. Those troops will open a way for themselves in case they attempt to surround them because they have good leaders and officers and the soldiers know how to fight.

The loss of territory is a motive that some refer to in order to justify their weakness. Are these gentlemen right? No, they are wrong. They have made an error. We have lost nothing. The towns we have abandoned in Luzon mean nothing. Study, if you wish, the map of the islands and you will be convinced that what we have lost does not amount to a hundredth part of the whole. We are abstemious and our abstemiousness with the harvest the country will yield will be our principal support. We have a large extent of uncultivated land. Let everyone work; a part of the men in the war and the rest in the field; the women and children in making bandages, lint and cloth, taking care of and sympathizing with the wounded, and, if possible, making cartridges and then we will attain our ideal.

* * *

Comments are welcome at aocampo@ateneo.edu

Digital memories

PINOY KASI

Michael L. Tan

THE FIRST DIGITAL CAMERA I HAD WAS A HEAVY EARLY model passed on to me by my father. I was really impressed with its photographs, but my enthusiasm was quickly dampened because its battery would run out after five or six shots, and had to be recharged using an adapter three times the size of the battery. The camera fell slowly into disuse and then went into storage.

Through the years, the cameras have improved, and I've been able to benefit from this technology without having to buy any. I've had two more digitals, and both were manufactured by Kodak, given to me as part of their awards for "child-friendly" columns. I have to say the cameras are the best prizes I've ever gotten.

'Kodakan'

The cameras give a new meaning to *"kodakan,"* the Filipino term we coined to mean photography. Suddenly, photography isn't just a matter of preserving memories, although, as I'm going to describe later in the column, that function remains important.

Given that I teach, research and write, the cameras have been a real boon, functioning almost as a very efficient research assistant.

Let me give a few examples.

Teaching anthropology has meant helping students to become more conscious about how our culture is constantly being shaped by different institutions, including government, the faith-based groups and mass media. We're surrounded, bombarded by all kinds of messages and images, and it's important we become critical about how those messages can be manipulative.

A digital camera allows me to capture those messages and images—either as still pictures or, lately, as short videos—which I then replay to students for their critical analysis.

For example, I once took a picture of a billboard ad showing women in a wild frenzy, chasing after a young male holding a new model of a cell phone. Of course, ads often use hyperbole to market a product, but it's still useful for young people to reflect on the way the ads reflect social norms. Is a man's self-worth so tied to his cell phone, to its being the latest model? Would you see ads showing a woman clinging to the latest model of a cell phone, and men chasing after her?

It isn't just billboard ads that you can shoot. One of my favorite teaching tools is a digital photograph of two female mannequins in the lobby of Mahidol University's International College (MUIC) in Thailand. One mannequin was decked out in a proper college uniform, meaning a skirt at knee's length, a blouse properly tucked in with sleeves reaching the elbows. The sign read: "MUIC uniform."

Next to that mannequin was another one showing a female in a skirt above the knee, a blouse too transparent, with sleeves that were too short, and a cell phone hanging from her neck. It had a sign that asked "Who?"

I use that digital photograph to talk about gender, and how society tries to control women's bodies through prescribed uniforms. Curiously, there was only one mannequin showing a male in the proper uniform, without an accompanying figure showing "improper" male uniforms. After all, males can't be "improper." I also ask students, "Now, how do you think the women students actually dress?" And, wisely, the kids answer, "Probably a lot more like 'Who'."

The possibilities for teaching materials are endless. I've shot, all at the spur of the moment, amulet vendors in Quiapo, shelves in a Mercury drugstore selling dozens of brands of skin whiteners, rows upon rows of sachet products in a *sari-sari* store.

Photocopiers

More recent models of digital cameras have such good close-up functions that they're really almost like portable photocopiers. I use them to take a picture of the white board after a particularly interesting class discussion, or a meeting, where the most important words and ideas have been written. That way you can review it later, even typing in the text into the computer and printing it out for the students or participants in the meeting.

This "photocopier" function is useful as well for converting photographs from books and magazines into teaching materials. In the past, we had to make slides to project on the screen. Now, you can just take a digital shot from a book and show it on the computer. I've used this photocopier-slides function for everything from maps to the lesions of different diseases.

The last Kodak digital camera I got has a "text" function that adjusts the settings so you can take fairly decent pictures that will show the words on a page. I say "fairly decent" because obviously you can't get down to very small fine print. But it's good enough if all you want is to do an electronic clipping of a newspaper or magazine for quick reference: an ad, a photograph, even recipes.

You can also use the close-up function for taking pictures of important documents like your passport and credit cards when you travel. If you lose them, you can quickly report the loss with all the details.

Digital zen

We return now to the original function of cameras—that of preserving memories. Some teachers ask students to submit a small ID picture which they then use as memory aids, but I never did that because the ID pictures often look very different from the person.

Besides I was younger then, with a better memory. Now with more senior moments, I've turned to the digital camera for help. At the beginning of a new semester, I take digital pictures of my students in groups, then print out the photographs so they can identify themselves. The poses are more natural, and the pictures current. I have a large digital file now of students. Who knows, someday one of them might become a president, or the country's most wanted criminal, or both, and the INQUIRER can use his photograph from his UP days.

The whole point of digital photography is that it allows so much more spontaneity, for people having their picture taken, as well as for the one doing the *kodakan*. You can be quicker as well to grab a photo opportunity . . . the first blooming lotus in a pond, a dragonfly in the garden, a child's first steps.

I do worry about how digital photography might reinforce our desire for instant gratification. My Yna, at age one and a half, had learned to pose for a digital shot and then reach out for the camera wanting to look at her image.

Recently while conducting some biological anthropology research in a coastal area, I chanced upon a school of tiny fish in the shallow waters. I didn't have my camera, and thought of rushing back to get it but then decided to stay put and just enjoy looking at the fish as they made their way, leisurely and gracefully, through the water and into the sunset.

Someday soon, I'll bring Yna back to that beach and remind her of the Zen of digital photography: there's gratification too in waiting, in resisting the compulsion to capture everything on film or a memory card. Bravo for the digital camera and digital memories, but our fondest, more precious memories are best kept in the mind's eye and in the heart.

COMITE INTERNATIONAL GENEVE
ICRC

OFWs IN LEBANON

FAMILY-LINKS WEB SITE

Over 30'000 OFWs were in Lebanon. Families are anxious to confirm their whereabouts and well being.

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www.familylinks.icrc.org

This ICRC web site aims to restore contact between families and offers possibilities:

- consult the list of the names of the persons who registered themselves in the conflict area or
- register one's relatives.

The website is managed by the ICRC in cooperation with the tracing services of National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies. The ICRC cannot verify the information sent via the site and cannot accept responsibility for any inaccurate information. It is the responsibility of those registering to ensure that no harm is caused by registration.

The ICRC is an impartial, neutral and independent organization whose exclusively humanitarian mission is to protect the lives and dignity of victims of war and internal violence and to provide them with assistance. The ICRC has maintained a permanent presence in the Philippines since 1982.

For more information, please consult:
www.icrc.org

Please Contact:

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Schools for prisoners

WITH WARM HEARTS AND OPEN MINDS, we welcome Senate Bill 2022, filed by Senate Minority Leader Aquilino Pimentel Jr., cutting short a prisoner's jail sentence if he/she enrolls in school while in prison. (PDI, 7/17/06) We fully agree with the senator's idea: "educational pursuit while in detention could help enhance (the prisoners') sense of self-respect and dignity."

At present, a convicted prisoner gains a total of 20 days for each month of good conduct—five days for good conduct and an additional 15 days for every month of study time. A corollary effect of this is the decongestion of our crowded jails.

Here in the Oriental Mindoro Provincial Jail (OMPJ), under the auspices of provincial warden Rolando O. Gonzales and his assistant, Ferdinand M. Ferancullo, educational and vocational pursuits have been encouraged since the early part of 2004. But it is only this year that these efforts are bearing fruits. Last May, a total of 30 inmates and three jail guards finished a Basic Course on Reflexology and Body Massage given by Tesda-Oriental Mindoro. The Alternative Learning System of the Calapan City division of the Department of Education, which at present has 52 elementary and high school detainee-learners, is on the third month of its Aksyon Para sa Karunungan at Abilidad ng Preso (AKAP). Many more vocational courses are for implementation, depending on the availability of funds.

Also last February, we established a semi-cooperative store (Samahan ng mga Mamimili sa OMP) composed of 120 detainees and 11 staff members of the OMPJ. The store caters to the consumer needs primarily of the detainees, their families and visitors. Although no formal course is offered in this venture, the members especially the officers of SM-OMPJ, are learning cooperativism and basic accountancy, even as they are earning.

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER LETTERS

It is also encouraging to know that Pimentel's bill grants inmates who volunteer to teach in the special academic and vocational classes for fellow inmates, a time credit equivalent to 15 days for every month of teaching duties. A significant number of us here have college degrees and are capable of rendering such services.

Through these educational pursuits while in detention, we are—to borrow the exact words of Pimentel—"increasing the literacy and skills standards, and strengthening the moral values of prisoners (that) will facilitate their integration in the mainstream of society as reformed and productive citizens."

We fervently hope that this bill will be passed into law at the soonest time and will have a retroactive effect, so that those who have already studied under such educational and vocational programs may be benefited. The bill, if passed into law, will also help government efforts to professionalize the management of jails and other detention centers.

—EDUARDO R. SERRANO,
political prisoner,
Oriental Mindoro Provincial Jail,
Calapan City

End culture of mendicancy among Filipinos

IT IS A RELIEF TO KNOW THAT THE CATHOLIC Bishops' Conference of the Philippines will "discuss the bribe scandal." We need clear minds to lead us. The explanation of Archbishop Angel Lagdameo is unacceptable. Did not Jesus warn us to beware of wolves in sheep's clothing? Another warning came from St. Paul who said that savage wolves will come in among you.

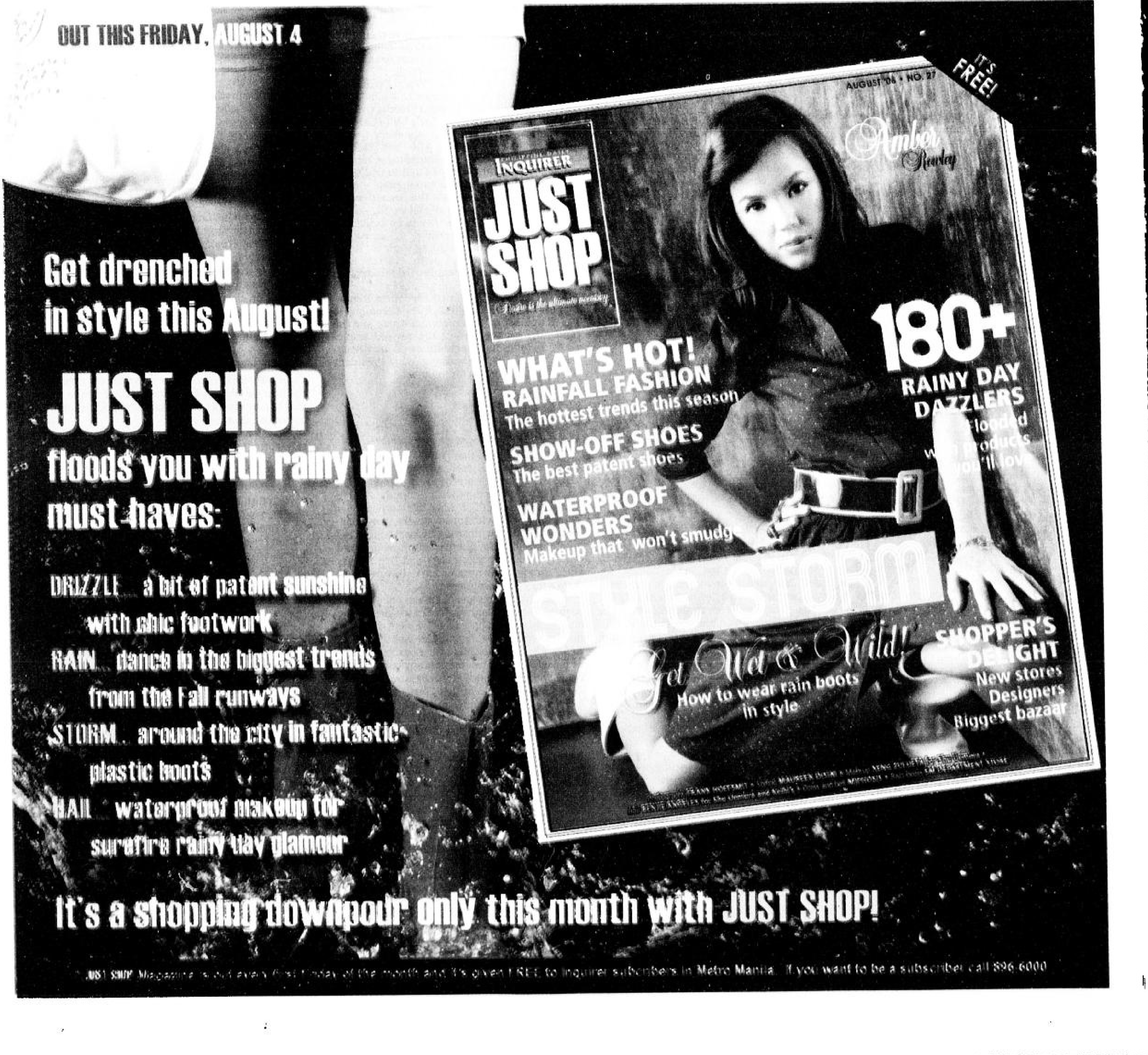
If my father, Salvador Araneta were alive, he would classify these bishops as "officials incapable of doing the job," as he did those officials in government who did not do their job. The problems of today, though monumental, can be overcome if there is a will. Bishops who make foolish excuses, or who cannot discern the truth, have no business being bishops.

It is high time for transparency. There are indeed other agencies where money could be channeled for those in need. The article of Archbishop Oscar Cruz that appeared in his blog, "Love of Neighbor," is a reality check. It is time to stop mendicancy. I believe there are better ways: Give those in need fishing rods, teach them to fish and they will never go hungry. Industrialize, stop bending to IMF-World Bank and Washington dictates; and never compromise as Jesus Himself never did. How right the bishop is, if justice tops our agenda, there will be fewer beggars.

The problem is, those in power want to hold on to power with the bait of charity dangled before the eyes of the poor. "Pro-poor" is actually a misnomer. It is time to look at poverty for what it really is: the result of injustice, greed, corruption and inefficiency.

My father wrote in his book "Christian Democracy for the Philippines" (1958) that "The doctrine of separation of Church and State should not be interpreted as involving the separation of State and God."

—LINA ARANETA SANTIAGO,
27 Mercury St., Bel-Air Village, Makati City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INQUIRER Northern Luzon

Editor Jun Bandayrel
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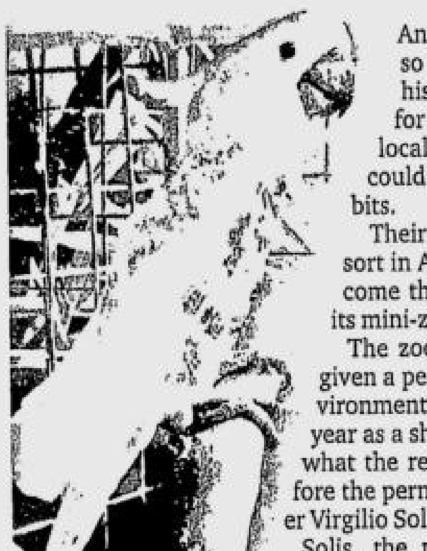
A resort home for abandoned pets

By Yolanda Sotelo-Fuertes
Bolinao, Pangasinan

WHEN A RESIDENT OF THE WESTERN PANGASINAN TOWN OF Bolinao was preparing to migrate to the United States a year ago, he was in a quandary: He did not know what to do with his four pet freshwater turtles.



An Australian tourist in town also did not know where to leave his pet monkey when it was time for him to go home. Same with a local government employee, who could no longer take care of her rabbits.

Their problems were solved as a resort in Arnedo Village decided to welcome their pets and care for them in its mini-zoo.

The zoo at Rock Garden Resort was given a permit by the Department of Environment and Natural Resources last year as a shelter for animals, but this was what the resort had been doing long before the permit was given, said resort owner Virgilio Solis Jr.

Solis, the provincial administrator, said the owners of the animals could claim their pets later if they wanted to.

He said the zoo started with two pairs of lovebirds he bought from local pet shops. "I'm very fond of these creatures even as a boy," he said.

He said he used to wake up to the chirping of birds and he thought it would be nice that the resort's guests would also experience the thrill of listening to singing birds in the early mornings.

"This is why when my family built this resort in the 1990s, I decided to allot an area for these birds," he said.

But more than that, he also wanted children in the town to learn to love animals and not to hurt or kill them.

Educational center

The zoo has become an educational center of sorts in the town, with students coming in droves to see and enjoy the birds. Each cage is marked with the common and scientific names, and the pet names (a pair of birds were called "Jules" and "Assunta"), of the animals for their easy identification.

Solis said he also talked with village officials and residents about taking care of animals, in the process converting most of them into animal lovers.

The zoo has other animals, too, but its bulk of collection are birds—lovebirds, a heron, an egret, a hummingbird, pigeons, a cockatoo, a hawk, a myna, a parrot, and the biggest of them all, a pair of ostriches. The collection also includes wild boar, a deer and turtles.

Unfortunately, the native fighting cock of Bolinao, called the "Boltex" (coined from "Bolinao Texas"), is missing from the zoo.

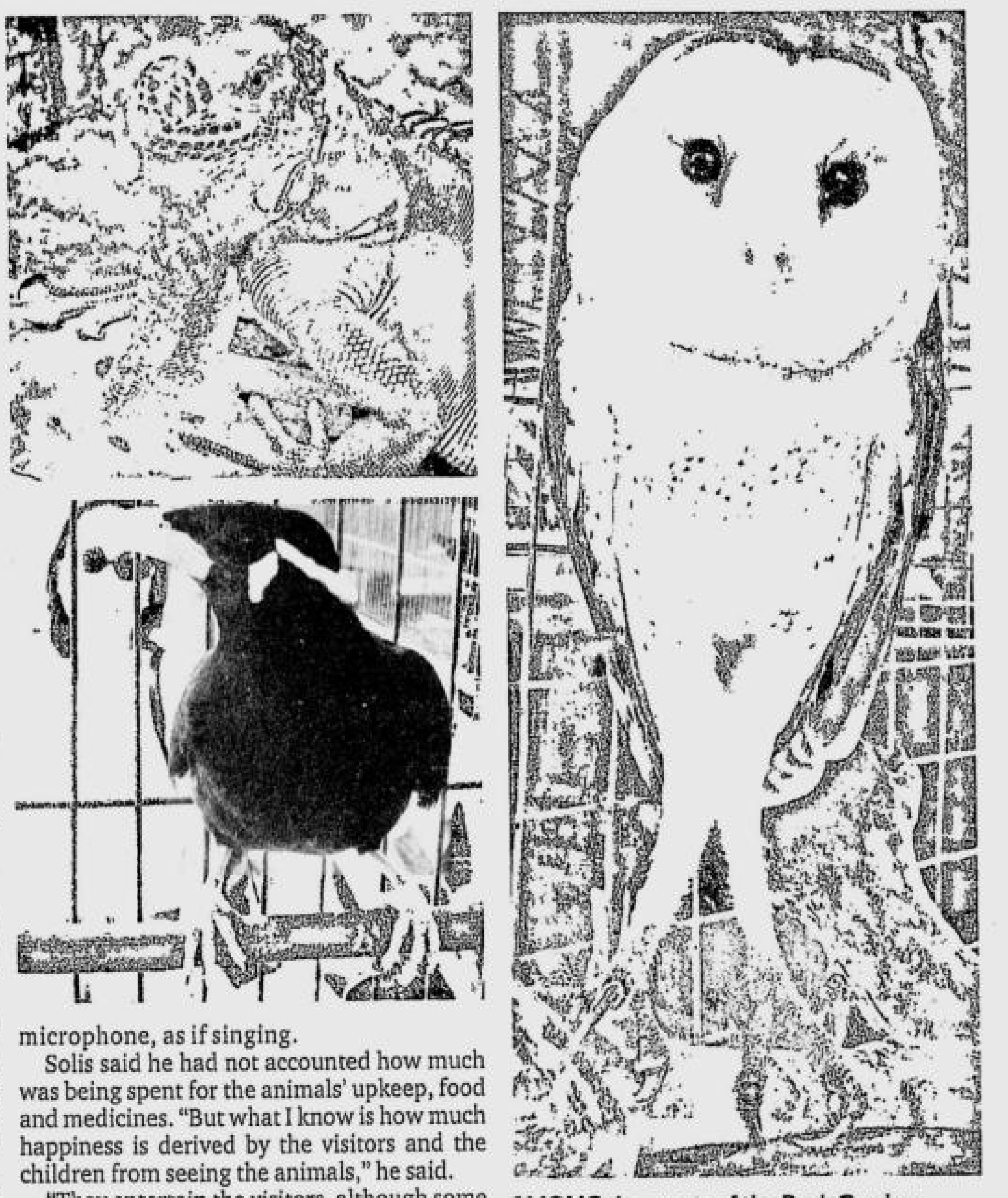
Solis said they used to keep Boltex in the zoo but they strayed. The Boltex can now be found only in the town's forested areas, he said.

"Overseeing" the animals is the statue of a *tikbalang* sitting atop a *balete* tree. The *tikbalang* is a half-man, half-horse creature of Filipino folklore. It smokes a cigar and haunts girls, which explains the nearby statue of a walking girl.

While the *tikbalang* is mythical, Solis wants the younger generation to get to know it. This is why the creature is depicted not in a menacing stance, but holding a microphone, as if singing.

Solis said he had not accounted how much was being spent for the animals' upkeep, food and medicines. "But what I know is how much happiness is derived by the visitors and the children from seeing the animals," he said.

"They entertain the visitors, although some funny incidents occasionally happen, as when a myna shouts, '*Pangit!*' (Ugly!) at guests," he said.



AMONG the guests of the Rock Garden Resort in Bolinao, Pangasinan: (From top left, clockwise) iguana, grass owl and myna. At far left is a parrot. PHOTOS BY EV ESPIRITU

For the love of Brutus, Ophelia, Upcat, Pansy et al.

By Elizabeth Lolarga
Contributor

ALTHOUGH SHE IS ON LEAVE FROM THE UNIVERSITY of the Philippines Baguio this semester, Prof. Victoria Rico Costina drives to school daily, including weekends, just to feed Brutus, a ginger tabby, and Ophelia, a pure black cat with fern green eyes, two shy felines that she cannot bring home.

'I'm just teaching so I can have money to sustain my cat ministry. I think I've turned eccentric'

The two are among 23 cats that are the beneficiaries of what she calls her "ministry."

Brutus prefers *tinapa* (smoked fish) and *inihaw na bangus* (grilled milkfish), the latter brought daily and halved, the other half going to the cats at home. Ophelia eats a mixture of *inihaw na bangus*, sardines, rice and *tinapa*.

In this age of poverty and human hunger, these cats are considered lucky by many.

This literature professor has brought home to Leonila Hill six cats from the UPB—Upcat, who later passed away, Pansy, Penelope, Sandra, Patrick and Begonia. They join Kuting, Kitchie, Whitey, Strawberry, Kitkat, Arwen, Rum, Richard, Lancelot, Eomer, Elanor, Bubbles, Lavender, Blosson, Skittles and Bobby.

Kuting, an imported Angora complete with papers, who was brought to the Philippines by Costina's husband Ruel from his former post in Saudi Arabia, has been house-trained and is considered the adopted daughter of the childless couple.

There are nine kittens to be given away once they can feed independently.

The naming of the cats is instinctive to the owner. "When I see a cat, I know what name to give it," Costina said. "I cull from my store of readings, mostly literary, but lately it's floral. I used to have a Petunia and a Hyacinth."

A FULL-TIME job of cat care and feeding for Costina.

This affinity for cats started when she was a child of seven, and their next-door neighbor, an aging Spanish woman, had to leave Baguio City and her cats behind.

Perfect caregiver

Costina was considered the perfect caregiver as she benefited from the old woman's generosity. The child used to stand outside the woman's doorway like a hungry cat every day, waiting for her ration of strawberry jam sandwich.

"Maybe she considered me a pest. That was why she left all the cats to me," Costina said.

Through the years, she has resorted to sometimes stealing leftover ham, sausages or *adobo* from their refrigerator. Her mother, Dr. Nenita Rico, looks for them, finds them gone, then tells her daughter, "Your mission is hopeless. Vickie, you cannot worry about all the cats in the world because there are millions out there. You'll go crazy."

Costina said she could not concentrate and had no peace of mind if she couldn't feed the cats. "It has affected everything. I'm just teaching so I can have money to sustain my cat ministry. I think I've turned eccentric."

Her quiet time consists of taking care of the cats' needs, among them, delousing each of them, constantly cleaning their toilet basins by changing the newspaper linings. Her mother assists her by buying bags of old newspapers from the University of the Cordilleras library.

'The rest of my life'

"I don't care for other things. These are what I'll do for the rest of my life," Costina said.

"I don't go out with friends. I hardly socialize. I'm perfectly happy as I am. Cat care is a full-time job. When I'm reading or working, the cats get on my lap or rub their bodies on my legs. I'm sure it's the food!"

She added that whenever her mother would dress up to the nines and go to parties, she would send her nagging text messages to put the leftover food in a kitty bag.

The effort seems worth it since Costina's cats are "devoted creatures like dogs. They're deeply loyal, too, though not as demonstrative."

Costina imagined what she would do if she were a rich woman. She would put up a cattery with a full-time staff, volunteers and an in-house veterinarian. Their mission would be to deposit stray cats there and get them ready for adoption.

For now, she tells her students to leave their leftovers in corners for the school cats and hopes they get converted to her ministry.

What worries her is who would take "the baton of cat care" when she is gone. Again, she imagined that if she were sick and had limited time, she would buy enough cages to put each cat in and give each away to cat lovers. "That," she said, "would be my last act on earth."

THE AUTHOR is a journalism graduate of the University of the Philippines and makes her home in Baguio City.

PROF. Victoria Rico Costina and her cat figurines: Hopes to convert her students to her ministry. PHOTOS BY EV ESPIRITU

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Alert issued for floating casino over unpaid taxes

By Jolene R. Bulambot
PDI Visayas Bureau

CEBU CITY—THE BUREAU OF Customs has issued an alert for MV Philippine Dream after the vessel, Cebu's floating casino that closed in 2002, left its docking area at the Cebu Yacht Club (CYC) in Lapu-Lapu City without a clearance from the BoC.

The BoC has been monitoring the vessel over its alleged failure to pay its taxes at the Bureau of Internal Revenue and its rental at the CYC.

The vessel was also being watched over reports that the Philippine Dream Corp. had sold the ship to the Hong Kong-based Lai Sun Development Corp. It would be required to pay taxes before it could send the floating casino and hotel to another country.

Capt. Amy Dumdum, master of MV Philippine Dream, yesterday clarified that the vessel was not escaping but merely sought anchor at Magellan Bay in Liloan town after they were asked to leave the CYC.

Dumdum admitted they owed over P1 million in anchorage rental to the yacht club that was unpaid since January.

He also denied MV Philippine Dream had been sold to Lai Sun Development Corp. since the latter is their parent company.

"It was a false information that we intended to leave Cebu. The truth is we were forced to leave the yacht club and we only sought relocation and temporary anchorage. We acknowledge our tax obligations and we will settle that," Dumdum said.

Lawyer James Edward Dy Buco, chief of the legal division of BoC-Central Visayas, said a hold order was issued to prevent the release of the vessel pending investigation.

He said the Enforcement and Security Service (ESS) and Customs Intelligence and Investigation Service (CIIS) had reported that the vessel left on July 23 and was bound for Manila when it was intercepted at the Magellan Bay.

Customs district collector Ricardo Belmonte issued the hold order on July 26 and Dumdum received it on July 28.

Dy Buco said they would determine if there was basis to recommend a warrant of seizure and detention.

MV Philippine Dream entered the country on June 1, 1995 from Japan with tax and duty free exemption as a capital outlay granted by the Board of Investment to Philippine Dream Corp., according to Dy Buco.

However, Dy Buco clarified that the exemption is non-transferable and exclusive only to Philippine Dream Corp.

STORM 'HENRY' IN C. LUZON

3 die; 111 villages under water

CITY OF SAN FERNANDO—STRONG RAINS BY tropical storm "Henry" since Monday caused rivers to swell in Tarlac and Nueva Ecija, flooding at least 111 villages and prompting about 1,000 families to evacuate, the Office of the Civil Defense in Central Luzon said.

Floods of two to four feet deep submerged the houses of at least 7,426 families in the two provinces, the OCD report said.

In Isabela, three people were killed in storm-related incidents, police said.

In Tarlac, the flooded areas are eight villages in Ramos, seven in La Paz, 10 in Moncada and three each in Paniqui and Camiling towns.

Neri Amparo, OCD regional director, said evacuations were monitored in Barangay Apalit, San Isidro and Poblacion Norte in Panique, Poblacion South in Ramos and Banawang West in Moncada. The families moved to elementary schools and chapels, she said.

In Nueva Ecija, floodwaters reached 42 barangays in Guimba, 30 in Cuyapo, five in Licab and three in San Antonio, reports from the OCD and the provincial disaster coordinating council in Nueva Ecija showed.

Gov. Tomas Joson III suspended work at the provincial capitol on Tuesday due to strong rains and floods. Classes in elementary and high schools in the province were also suspended.

In Aurora, the Bayanihan River in the capital town of Baler and Minanga, Sambay and Dibacong rivers in the northern town of Casiguran have overflowed but floodwaters have not spilled yet to houses, according to Danilo Nieva, operations chief of the Aurora PDCC.

Gov. Bellaflor Angara-Castillo sent emergency teams on Monday to 17 villages at high risk to flash floods and landslides.

Mountain debris let loose by the rains made the Baler-Casiguran and Baler-Bongabon roads impassable. Aurora's remaining link now is the Pantabangan (Nueva Ecija)-Canili (Aurora) road, Nieva said.

"Henry" was the third storm to hit Central Luzon since last month. Typhoons "Florita" on July 12-17 and "Glenda" on July 23-27 destroyed less than P100 million worth of crops, fisheries and fishpond dikes. Strong currents breached two dikes in Dinalupihan, Bataan and San Narciso, Zambales.

Four persons drowned while four others were killed by lightning.

In Isabela, Francisco Lumanog, 33, of Naguilian town, died when a tamarind tree fell on his tricycle on Monday night, police said.

Senior Supt. Jude Santos, acting Isabela police director, said Nelson Agriam, 43, and Ernesto Guting Jr., 22, both farmers in Delfin Albano town, died when they were struck by lightning also on Monday.

Santos said Loreto Ramos Jr., 29, a farmer in Reina Mercedes town, was missing when he was swept by strong river currents in Barangay District 1 on Tuesday.

With reports from Tonette Orejas and Anselmo Roque, PDI Central Luzon Desk, and Villamor Visaya Jr., PDI Northern Luzon Bureau

NIÑO JESUS ORBETA/PDI SOUTHERN LUZON BUREAU

RESIDENTS of a village in Tabaco City take shelter at an evacuation center in San Antonio Elementary School. Some of the evacuees fled out of fear of lava flows from Mayon. Other residents, however, continue to stray into a 6-km danger zone to harvest crops and till farms.

Kibitzers told to steer clear of Mayon lava

LEGAZPI CITY—VOLCANOLOGISTS warned visitors to keep a safe distance from Mayon's lava flow which has grown to the size of a four-story building that could collapse and lead to an avalanche of volcanic materials.

During its small eruptions for more than two weeks now, Mayon had been spewing a continuous stream of lava, said the Philippine Institute of Volcanology and Seismology (Phivolcs) yesterday.

Lava had advanced by some 200 meters since Sunday and is now barely 200 meters away from the 6-km Permanent Danger Zone, added Phivolcs.

City Mayor Noel Rosal said he will order the temporary closure of high-risk areas where villagers had insisted on a close view of the lava front that currently measures about 40 meters wide and 15 meters high.

"We will put boundaries and ask security support from the military to ensure public safety," Rosal said.

"Taking a close look at the lava front is not really dangerous but since it is within the 6-km PDZ, the area is at high risk of pyroclastic flows when the volcano suddenly explodes," said Cedric Daep, head of the Albay Public Safety and Emergency Management Office (Apsemo).

The volcano's sulfur dioxide emission rate dropped from yesterday's reported record high of 12,548 tons but remained "high" at 7,418 tons, way above the normal level of 500 tons per day.

There were 354 tremor episodes generated by lava fragments hitting the southeast slopes.

Earthquake activity inside Mayon indicates an "open magma system," which means there is no clogging but free-flowing magma from the crater, said Eduardo Laguerta, Phivolcs-Legazpi resident volcanologist.

He added the main lava flow has detoured to the Mabinit Channel after the Bonga Gully became swollen from unabated lava flow. Alert Level 3 remained hoisted over Mayon. Ephraim Aguilar, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau

Carabaos find new use in village waste collection

By Delfin T. Mallari Jr.
PDI Southern Luzon Bureau

LUCENA CITY—FOR CHILDREN living in the more than 20 subdivisions in Barangay Gulang-Gulang in the city outskirts, the familiar sight of the carabao is not a beast of burden pulling a plow in the field.

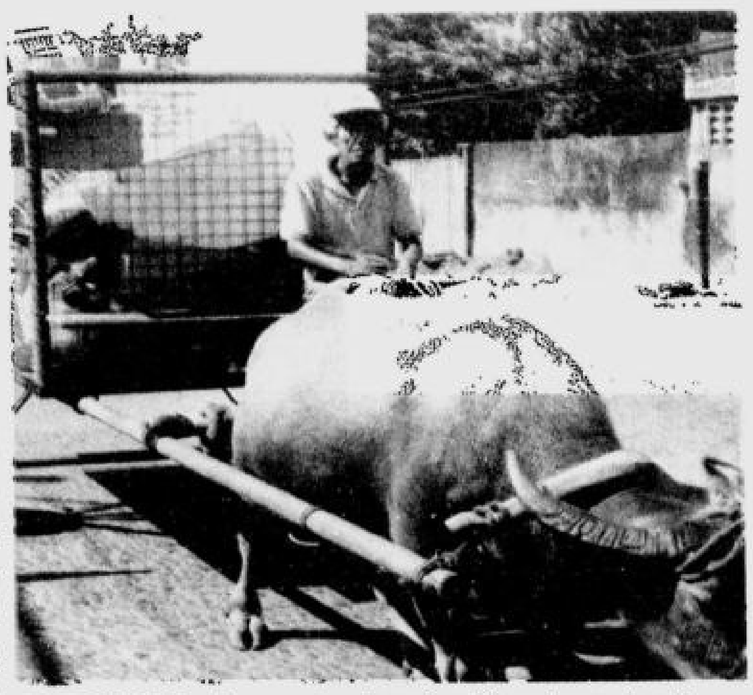
Instead, the so-called farmer's best friend drags a four-wheel cart to help clean the environment by collecting solid waste and trash of urban residents.

Village chieftain Anselmo Regis Jr. said they started using carabao in their garbage collection sometime last year when the cost of repairing a dilapidated dump truck, which they have been using for at least 10 years, was no longer economical.

"Buying another truck is not an option with the high cost of maintenance. Besides, our budget could not afford one," Regis said.

He said they first resorted to using 15 bicycles with a sidecar, which City Hall officials had provided in line with the government waste disposal program.

"But with the up-and-down topography of most parts of the village, our collectors could not cope with the strenuous pedaling. Our 'padyak' bikes also often broke down," Regis said with a chuckle.



THIS VILLAGE makes use of carabaos in a different way—to pull carts for its trash collection system. DELFIN MALLARI/PDI SOUTHERN LUZON BUREAU

He said he remembered the sight of a man and his carabao that were then collecting garbage at one area of his village during the last election campaign.

"The animal was pulling not a four-wheel cart but a bamboo sledge filled with several plastics of assorted garbage which the man had collected in the subdivision's neighborhood in exchange for a few pesos," Regis said.

But he stopped the collection when he found that the enterprising villager just dumped the collected trash on the river bank.

"The garbage collector was not even sorting out the recyclable materials which he could still sell for a few pesos more. He was just after the collection fee, which he himself imposed on his clients," said the village chieftain.

He said the village council readily adopted his proposal to use carabao in garbage collection but this time, the animal will no longer pull a bamboo sledge but a four-wheel cart with an enclosed space for the collected trash.

Regis said Lucena Mayor Ramon Talaga Jr. and the City Agriculture Office helped them purchase the initial batch of carabaos.

"But when the 10 carabaos were delivered, we found out that all of them were still young. So, we exchanged the 10 with seven fully matured beasts that were all ready to do the job," recalled village councilor Melo Merano.

Merano said the barangay council also put up a material recovery facility (MRF) in one site of the village.

Republic Act 9003, or the Economic Solid Waste Management Act, of 2000, requires each barangay or cluster of barangays to set up an MRF.

The facility will carry out the waste segregation, recycling, composting of biodegradable waste and storing of recyclable materials.

Under Section 10 of RA 9003, barangays play a vital role in carrying out the provisions of the law, because segregation and collection of waste are supposed to be conducted in their jurisdictions.

Regis said the volunteer garbage collectors were also the ones sorting out the biodegradable and non-biodegradable wastes once these reached the MRF site along the river bank.

The village of Gulang-Gulang is the biggest in the city with an estimated 25,000 population.

Regis said the collector is not paid by the village.

"Their payment comes from selling the collected recyclable materials. I also stopped the practice of imposing garbage collection fee for each household. The villagers are not obliged to pay any amount. What I ask them instead is just to donate to the collector the still cashable trash materials," Regis said.

Alfredo Llana, one of the volunteer garbage collectors, said he earns an average of P150 to P200 daily for the still cashable materials that he collects during his round of his assigned route.

"Some of the households still give us money even when they are not obligated to pay us. We also accept it," he said.

ROUNDUP

SC reinstates judge

TABACO CITY—The Supreme Court has reinstated Arnulfo Cabredo, three years after the Tabaco regional trial court executive judge was dismissed for grave ignorance of the law. Cabredo, then the presiding judge of RTC Branch 15, a special court for heinous crimes, was fired for approving a petition to release hundreds of thousands of bags of rice believed to have been smuggled through the city's international port.

Job Belen, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau

Driver killed

BAGUIO CITY—A driver was killed and 10 of his passengers were hurt on Monday when their jeep careened 30 meters off the road and fell on a riverbank in Buguias, Mt. Province, police said. The body of Joel Belnas, 36, was pinned by the steering wheel. Police said the slippery road could have caused Belnas to lose control of the vehicle. Intermittent rains brought by tropical depression "Henry" drenched most parts of Cordillera on Monday. ***Vincent Cabreza, PDI Northern Luzon Bureau***

Wanted: Roads

BAGUIO CITY—Farmers in the Cordillera have proposed more infrastructure projects to the Department of Social Welfare and Development to help in the government's poverty alleviation programs. Janet Armas, regional coordinator for Kalahi-CIDDS in the Cordillera, said the farmers wanted more farm-to-market roads, bridges, water systems, and flood control and post-harvest facilities. Armas said the World Bank allotted P41.6 million to finance the Kalahi-CIDDS poverty alleviation program in the Cordillera.

Desiree Caluza, PDI Northern Luzon Bureau

Priests' Day

STA. CRUZ, Laguna—About 150 priests and religious members of the San Pablo Diocese in Laguna and scores of Manila clerics will be among about 8,000 members of the Roman Catholic clergy all over the country who will celebrate Priests' Day on Aug. 4, in memory of St. John Maria Vianney, the patron saint of priests all over the world. The Manila Archdiocese will hold a concelebrated Mass presided over by Bishop Gaudencio Rosales. The Laguna clergy will pray for five days for vocation, spiritual growth, national unity and peace.

Romulo Ponte, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau

1 dies in clash

LUCENA CITY—One suspected New People's Army member was killed in an encounter between government forces and communist rebels in Barangay Veronica, Lopez, Quezon Friday. Army Major Jose Broso, spokesperson of the Armed Forces Southern Luzon Command, identified the slain rebel as Jessie Gamosa, allegedly one of the ranking cadres of an NPA rebel group that operates in the Quezon-Bicol boundary. Broso said police and military troops chanced upon an undetermined number of heavily armed NPA rebels massing up in the area. Firefight ensued, lasting for about 10 minutes, after which the dissidents escaped in different directions leaving behind the body of their dead comrade along with several personal belongings. ***Delfin Mallari Jr., PDI Southern Luzon Bureau***

RP media get first glimpse of Bolante in detention center

From page A1

scam and the subject of an arrest warrant issued by the Philippine Senate—Schmidt filed a motion to keep the court proceedings closed to the public.

Judge DD Sitgraves granted the motion, and reporters were told to leave the courtroom.

It was learned later from the US justice department's Executive Office for Immigration Review (EOIR), which manages immigration courts, that the hearing was rescheduled to Aug. 24.

EOIR spokesperson Susan Eastwood said both Bolante's lawyer and Homeland Security's Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) had "requested more time to prepare" for the case.

Schmidt had yet to return a phone call from the INQUIRER as of press time.

Life as a detainee

Immigration authorities took reporters on a tour of the three-story, high-security San Pedro Detention Center on Terminal Island, 30 miles south of Los Angeles.

The tour gave reporters a glimpse of Bolante's life as a detainee, which involves getting up from his prison cot at 6 a.m., eating three cafeteria-style meals a day, and engaging in recreation in between meals.

Recreation includes making phone calls, stretching, joining exercise classes, playing basketball or soccer, and watching PG-13 movies on weekends.

"They can't see 'Escape from Alcatraz,' obviously," quipped ICE spokesperson Virginia Kice, who escorted reporters during the tour.

The San Pedro detainees have access to a reading room with an immigration law library, computers, newspapers and magazines.

Apart from Bolante, there are between 15 and 20 Filipinos detained at the facility, Kice said. Most of the several hundred detainees at the facility are from Mexico, she said.

All detainees are dressed in regulation jumpsuits but those held for noncriminal charges and awaiting immigration proceedings, like Bolante, wear navy blue, and those charged with crime wear orange.

High-security detainees wear red.

Amicus brief

In Manila, law experts from the University of the Philippines said they would contest the efforts of Bolante's lawyer to block "all third parties" from intervening in Bolante's application for asylum.

Romel Bagares, a lawyer and research fellow of the UP Law Center-Institute of International Legal Studies, said the 20-page amicus brief prepared by him and his colleagues to oppose Bolante's asylum application would be filed later this week before Judge Sitgraves.

"We will oppose it and show that Mr. Bolante does not qualify as a refugee because he is not being persecuted. The case against him is not political but involves a violation of [Philippine] criminal statutes, particularly those on plunder and graft," the lawyer said.

Bagares said his group had received information that Bolante's lawyer had filed a motion to exclude all third parties from intervening in the case.

He said Bolante's initial application for asylum must have already been rejected by an asylum officer because the case had been brought before an immigration judge.

"But Mr. Bolante would have to show evidence this time that there is a pattern of persecution against him. He will have to show previous incidents and connect the dots to prove that persecution," Bagares said.

Bagares expressed doubt that Bolante could credibly show that he was being persecuted in the Philippines for his political beliefs, race or religion.

But the lawyer said it would be natural for asylum cases to drag on for years because of the intricate rules and procedures involved.

"There was a case of a Rwandan pastor accused of participating in massacres in his country and he escaped to the United States. It took three years before he was finally brought back to Rwanda to face the charges against him," Bagares said.

Fear of persecution

Bolante has been held by immigration authorities at the San Pedro facility since he was arrested at the Los Angeles International Airport on July 7 for supposedly carrying a cancelled B1/B2 visa.

Yesterday, he was to file a petition for asylum as a defense against deportation and was to claim that communist rebels would kill him if he returned to the Philippines, according to a source who requested anonymity.

He was to claim fear of persecution by the New People's Army, the armed wing of the Communist Party of the Philippines, which supposedly believed that his involvement in the fertilizer fund scam had hurt the farmers, the source said.

The funds were disbursed to administration allies, purportedly to help ensure the victory of President Macapagal-Arroyo in the 2004 presidential election.

But the CPP has denied that Bolante was on the NPA hit list, and described his claim as a mere ploy to boost his eligibility for asylum.

Bolante, treasurer of Rotary International, is known to be a close friend of Ms Arroyo's husband, Jose Miguel "Mike" Arroyo.

The fertilizer fund scam was investigated for many months by the Senate committee on agriculture chaired by Sen. Ramon Magsaysay Jr., but Bolante was able to elude all its summonses.

Senators believe that Bolante is using the asylum bid to escape investigation and prosecution for the fund scam.

Use P1-B fund

At a forum in Manila, Sen. Franklin Drilon said the administration should use part of the P1 billion recently allocated by Ms Arroyo to her anticorruption campaign to bring Bolante back to the country.

"My suggestion is that part of the P1 billion [anticorruption fund] be used to repatriate Joc-joc Bolante. Then the antigraft drive of this administration will acquire some credibility," Drilon said.

But he said he was "not surprised" by the administration's inaction on Bolante's case.

2 peas in pod

Sen. Panfilo Lacson said Bolante had a clone in Overseas Workers Welfare Administration chief Marianito Roque, one of the officials being questioned on the shortage of funds for the emergency repatriation of Filipino workers trapped in war-torn Lebanon.

Lacson said Bolante and Roque were appearing "more and more like two peas from the same pod."

He said that apart from being proteges of Mike Arroyo, they were appointed to sensitive positions for a purpose.

"Both were appointed to their positions with the same mission of helping GMA cheat to win the 2004 election, both misused hundreds of millions of pesos of their office funds, both were discovered through a paper trail, both refused to be investigated, both would probably get away with their misdeeds, momentarily at least," Lacson said. *With reports from Philip C. Tubeza and Juliet Labog-Javellana in Manila*

UP prof: Killings could be nat'l security policy

From page A1

peared to be in line with a slant in the national security policy adopted by the Arroyo administration since 2002, when it noticed the good showing of electoral groups espousing "national democracy," a program identified with the Communist Party of the Philippines.

Ultimately to blame

Ferrer appeared to share the view of the Commission on Human Rights that regardless of who was behind the spate of murders, the Arroyo administration was ultimately responsible.

"Just as in the killings of journalists, whether or not a government institution or officer is involved, the onus of protecting the rights of its citizens falls squarely on the government," she said.

"The sheer number of killings of selected targets and the modus operandi point strongly in the direction of a government 'national security' policy—strictly confidential perhaps, limited to a few circles, perhaps, but ultimately sanctioned by the leadership through sheer inaction or inability, or worse, actual complicity."

Enemy No. 1

Ferrer observed that for the Arroyo administration, the "No. 1 enemy is the national democratic left."

She said that in the early years of the Arroyo presidency, alarm had been raised within the administration over the good showing of party-list groups and the communist rebels' use of force during the elections, including forced collection of fees from candidates.

"Coincidentally, or shall we say consequently, political killings targeting the Left began in late 2004," she said.

By the INQUIRER tally, at least 244 militants and 47 media persons have been murdered since Ms Arroyo assumed office in 2001.

PNP: No such policy

Militants have suspected paramilitary groups of being behind most of the assassinations, the latest of which occurred on Monday, when two activists and a photojournalist were gunned down by unidentified assassins in different parts of the country.

The police rejected Ferrer's claim.

"(We) do not see any policy of government that specifically or even implicitly (says go) run after them," said Philippine National Police spokesperson Senior Supt. Samuel Pagdilao Jr.

Pagdilao said the policy being aggressively pursued by government was the breaking of the spine of the CPP and its armed wing, the New People's Army, through intensified military operations and legal offensive.

War on terror

According to Pagdilao, leftist groups have been allowed to join mainstream politics so they can "voice out whatever opinion or stand they have on the matter, especially (in connection with) political and socioeconomic concerns," he said.

Ferrer said the Arroyo administration's security policy was founded on the global war on terrorism, in which communist rebels had been singled out along with the Abu Sayyaf, and on the continued opposition to her government.

The national democratic left "plays a very visible role" in the latter, she said.

"These two rationale effectively make the national democratic left the Number One enemy of the current government. The Abu Sayyaf and the military adventurists only come next, and the latter is treated with kid gloves," Ferrer said.

"Not surprisingly, the national democratic left is being attacked through military, political and extrajudicial means."

More than Palparan

Ferrer said that while the focus of militants' condemnation for a long time had been Maj. Gen. Jovito Palparan, a tough-fisted military officer perennially accused of human rights violations, "the geographic and organizational spread of the victims reflect that a 'national policy' is in place."

"This is not just General Palparan showing the way. This is the Armed Forces of the Philippines, the Philippine National Police, the National Security Council led by the national security adviser, the Department of Interior and Local Governments and the Department of National Defense at work," she said.

The justice department can hardly be expected to go against the security forces of government, she said.

A ploy

Ferrer said the killings of leftist leaders not espousing national democracy and of former New People's Army rebels appeared to be a "ploy to pass on the blame (for) the killings on 'purges' or factional fighting."

"It serves the triple purpose of debilitating all Left groups, further discrediting the CPP, and diverting blame away from the government," she said.

Ferrer warned that assassinations would only inspire others, especially young people, to go to the hills and join the armed struggle, "given (the) perceived futility to effect changes through parliamentary means."

"The armed groups fight in the battlefield; the legal arena should be confined to a battle of ideas, or contending politics," she said.

"Assassinations do not have a place in civilized society; the practice is condemnable, must not be tolerated and must not be allowed to be embedded in our social and political life (thus, the CPP-NPA should also stop the practice of executions and imposing the death penalty)."

Ferrer added: "Whipping up the 'red scare' is anachronistic to the post-Cold War age. The resort to assassinations using the communist bogey manifests the weakness of the AFP in the battlefield, and the government's inability to govern, and get the support of the people."

Kalinga doctors close clinics to protest Claver shooting

BAGUIO CITY—DOCTORS IN Kalinga closed their clinics on Tuesday and joined protests to denounce the killing of Bayan Muna-Kalinga coordinator Alice Omengan-Claver and the wounding of her husband and Bayan Muna provincial chair Dr. Constancio "Chandu" Claver.

More than 150 doctors and members of religious groups in the capital Tabuk rode in a convoy of 65 vehicles around town and then drove to the provincial police headquarters and the capitol to call on officials to solve the case.

Claver and her husband were taking their daughter, Alex, 11, to school at 6:45 a.m. on Monday when they were attacked by armed men. The Clavers' other daughter, Cassandra, 7, was also with them but she was unhurt.

Political beliefs

Dr. Marlene Duyan, president of the Kalinga Medical Society (KMS), said doctors closed their clinics as "a sign of protest over this cowardly and dastardly act."

Constancio Claver, also vice chair of the Cordillera Peoples Alliance chapter in Kalinga, is a former president of KMS and runs a clinic in Tabuk.

Vice Mayor Rainier Sarol condemned the ambush, saying the Clavers' political beliefs were not a reason to attack them.

Supt. Pedro Ramos, Kalinga police director, told the doctors the police would not stop until the case was solved.

Hard to get witness

"Even though the police and the military are being accused of involvement in the killing, we will provide our services [to solve the case]," Ramos told the INQUIRER.

He denied allegations that the police had a hand in the ambush.

"The investigation has yet to yield good results. It is hard to get a witness," Ramos said.

Alleged police role

He said the police had offered to provide security personnel in the hospital to secure Claver, his family and visitors.

Beverly Longid, a cousin of Alice and chair of the Cordillera Human Rights Alliance, said family members were still discussing the police offer.

"Family members never requested any police personnel since they have a strong suspicion that the police have something to do with the murder. We have a strong suspicion that the police have plans to kill Chandu," Longid said.

Ironic

"We are not totally rejecting the offer, but we found it ironic that there was no policeman in the area where the Clavers were attacked when there were checkpoints everywhere in Tabuk. The least that the police could do is conduct a speedy investigation," she added. *Desiree Caluza and Villamor Visaya Jr., PDI Northern Luzon Bureau*

GMA: Solve 10 cases, jail suspects in 10 weeks

From page A1

media or leftist killings," Ms Arroyo said in a directive which coincided with growing public skepticism over her administration's ability to stop the violence.

Justice Secretary Raul Gonzalez and the PNP said they would try to comply while Interior Secretary Ronaldo Puno promised there would be arrests "shortly."

Bloody Monday

Ms Arroyo's order came a day after three people were killed in a space of two hours in "Bloody Monday" attacks in Metro Manila, Kalinga and Sorsogon.

The victims were Bayan Muna coordinator Alice Omengan-Claver, League of Filipino Students spokesperson Rei Mon Guran and Tanod tabloid photographer Prudencio "Dick" Melendres.

The murder of Claver—who was married to a physician—in Kalinga so outraged doctors in the area that they shut down their clinics yesterday so they could join in a protest rally. *(See story on this page).*

Ms Arroyo had set up Task Force Usig to investigate the killings. But nearly three months after its creation, the unit has yet to come up with positive results.

Speaking at a Cabinet meeting in Malacañang, Ms Arroyo again condemned the killings "in the strongest possible terms" and ordered authorities "to dig deeper into the motives involved."

Whatever the motive

"These cases could be personally or politically motivated," the President said. "But whatever the score, it is the full intent of the government to check all criminal acts and uphold the rule of law."

A total of 244 political activists, mainly identified with leftist groups, and 47 journalists have been assassinated since Ms Arroyo took office in 2001.

Press Secretary Ignacio Bunye said Ms Arroyo issued the directive because "she would like some results to be produced as far as the cases are concerned."

No indiscriminate arrests

On fears that authorities may end up arresting anyone just to meet the presidential deadline, Bunye said he believed the DOJ and the PNP would keep within the law and "will not cut corners."

Bunye also said the Palace was against vigilantism and pledged "full protection" to witnesses who came forward.

"We will comply with the President's directives ... (The) task force is just about wrapping up its report on a number of cases. We will be making arrests shortly," Puno said.

He said the situation had become frustrating in the face of the militants' doubts about the integrity of the task force.

Witnesses and luck

PNP spokesperson Senior Supt. Samuel Pagdilao said police would "do their best" to meet the deadline.

But he said the solution of the cases would also depend on the cooperation of citizens, especially witnesses and the kin of victims.

"The other part of this equation is the support of witnesses and luck," Pagdilao said, noting the reluctance of victims' families to cooperate in the investigation.

"We want these killings to be solved, and we need everybody's help ... It cannot be a 'one-man or one-unit (job)," he said.

Need for witnesses

As far as the killing of journalists was concerned, Pagdilao said they were independent cases, some motivated by personal vengeance and others a reaction to the work of reporters.

PNP Director General Oscar Calderon said: "It would be in the best interest of justice for them [witnesses] to come forward and provide our investigators with information that they have about these cases."

Militants have blamed the killings on so-called "death squads" let loose by government security forces.

Gonzalez said the President's deadline could be met.

'This is doable'

"This will be hampered by many factors, like the attitude of lawyers, for example. They don't appear at the hearings. But we will do our best, this is doable. We'll try to meet it," Gonzalez said.

He also said that he had ordered the National Bureau of Investigation to go after the suspects involved in the killings.

Asked how the DOJ could ensure that the deadline for solving the cases would be met, Gonzalez said he would make sure there was evidence to back up police arrests.

There have been several instances in the past when cases filed by the police against crime suspects ended up being thrown out by the courts for lack of evidence.

Party-list Representatives Teddy Casiño (Bayan Muna) and Rafael Mariano (Anakpawis) dismissed Ms Arroyo's 10-week deadline as a publicity stunt.

"It is one thing to call for an investigation and arrest the suspects, and another to act now to stop the killings," Casiño said. *With reports from Luige A. del Puerto, Leila B. Salaverria, Norman Bordadora and Philip C. Tubeza*

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NIÑO JESUS ORBETA

FIREWORKS from lava spewed out by Mt. Mayon entertains a resident in barangay Mabinit in Legazpi City.

AFP launches new offensive vs Abu Sayyaf

By Julie S. Alipala
PDI Mindanao Bureau

ZAMBOANGA CITY—THE MILITARY yesterday launched a fresh offensive against foreign and local terrorists in Sulu.

Joint Task Force Comet chief Brig. Gen. Alexander Aleo said the offensive that began at midnight targeted both foreign and local terrorists in the hinterlands of Indanan town.

There were "persistent reports and strong indications that [Jemaah Islamiyah leaders] Umar Patek and Dulmatin, along with the Abu Sayyaf, were taking refuge in the area," Aleo said.

Sulu Gov. Benjamin Loong confirmed the military operation and assured civilians they would not be displaced.

Loong said the offensives were confined to Sitio Upper Malimbaya in Barangay Kagay in Indanan, "a place which is not populated due to its remoteness to the town center."

Aleo said the operation involved Army and Marine personnel.

Southern Command chief Maj. Gen. Gabriel Habacon said the military received information that "top-of-the-list terrorist groups" were converging near Indanan "and we designated an extensive offensive plot for the capture of these elements to prevent them from performing terror activities."

"This will not be a quick battle but it will be one where we will be decisive and victorious," Habacon said.

He said the military bombed the rebels' mountainous hideout, with helicopter gunships and ground assault planes firing rockets and dropping bombs on a suspected Abu Sayyaf base.

"We've been tracking these terrorists for months," Habacon told reporters in Zamboanga City. "The time is now. We've located them and we're going to finish them off."

Heavy fighting broke out after soldiers caught up with the militants fleeing the air strikes. Two soldiers were wounded in the clashes, Habacon said, adding that 500 soldiers were taking part in the assault. *With Reuters and AP reports*

GMA names 'super team'

By Gil C. Cabacungan Jr.

PRESIDENT MACAPAGAL-ARROYO YESTERDAY put the final pieces in her Super Region strategy by naming the point man for each region.

Presidential Management Staff chief Arthur Yap said those appointed as "focal persons" or coordinators for the regions were:

- Arthur Yap—for Northern Luzon.
- Edgardo Pamintuan, head of Subic-Clark Alliance Development Corp.—for the Metro Manila Urban Beltway.
- Tourism Secretary Joseph "Ace" Durano—for the Central Philippines.
- Presidential adviser on the peace process Jesus Dureza—for Southern Philippines.
- Ramon Sales, head of the government's Information and Communication Technology (ICT)—for Cyber Corridor, or cluster of places meant for call centers and cutting-edge industries.

P372-B for Sona projects

The government's massive infrastructure program over the next four years, announced by Mrs. Arroyo in her address to the nation, will cost P372 billion over the next four years, 81 percent of which will be financed by the national government, state corporations and local government units.

The figure is nearly 80 percent higher than the P207 billion given by the President last week, later raised to roughly P300 billion.

"We are confident that the total tab will be more or less in that neighborhood [P372 billion]," said Budget Secretary Rolando Andaya in a statement.

Foreign Secretary Alberto Romulo said the project cost breakdown provided by the government should "answer now all the nitpickers, the critics that are appearing in the papers."

Andaya said the P372 billion budget for the 92 "big-ticket" items listed by Ms Arroyo—consisting of roads, rail systems, airports, ports and other basic requirements in the planned super-regions of Northern Luzon, Metro Luzon, Central Philippines, Southern Philippines, and the Cyber Corridor—was not a fixed amount because costs could still go up with escalating oil prices. *With AFP*

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Man in slain lensman's note negative for nitrate

Requests protective custody from cops

By Nancy C. Carvajal

ONE OF TWO PERSONS TAKEN taken in for questioning the other day over the murder of news photographer Prudencio "Dick" Melendres in Malabon City tested negative yesterday for gunpowder nitrate, the police said.

Antonio Lopez was one of two people mentioned by Melendres in a sealed letter he had instructed his wife to open in case he was killed.

Melendres, a photographer for the tabloid Tanod, was shot dead by four armed men in a narrow alley at around 8:30 a.m. Monday.

TANOD photographer Prudencio "Dick" Melendres RYAN LIM

He was a cousin of reporter Albert Orsolino, who was also killed last May.

"Lopez was found negative when he took the paraffin test. He is still in our custody upon his request,'" said Insp. Jorge Tabayag, the chief of the police team investigating the case.

Melendres' house is only three houses away from Lopez's in Phase 3, Gozon compound, Tonsuya, Malabon City.

Tabayag, however, said, a paraffin test is not conclusive because a person could have used gloves or washed off the gunpowder residue with vinegar right after firing a gun.

Apart from Lopez, the other person mentioned in Melendres' letter was a certain "Chief Marco," Tabayag added.

Lopez, who is now temporarily detained at the Special Group Office, denied that he was involved in the reporter's death. He added that he had volunteered to take the paraffin test.

Melendres' letter dated June 14 was addressed to Supt. Sotero Ramos, former intelligence chief of the Northern Police District, former Malabon police chief Supt. Moises Gueverra and NPD director, Chief Supt. Leopoldo Bataoil.

"He knew who were out to kill him and gave out details in his letter," Bataoil said, but refused to discuss this with reporters.

Tabayag, however, said Melendres had claimed that the two persons in his letter were also responsible for the death of his cousin Orsolino.

Lopez said he could not think of any reason why Melendres would think that he wanted to kill him. He also told police he was at his home cooking food for his three children when the shooting incident took place.

"We were like family," he added, explaining that his son was Melendres' godchild while he was also a "*ninong*" (godfather) to one of the reporter's five children.

JUST LOOKING A man looks for reusable materials from the debris that was washed ashore from the Marikina River. The river's water level has risen due to heavy rains wrought by tropical depression "Henry." RAFFY LERMA

WHAT'S INSIDE
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▨ **Shabu, bullets** found in pirated DVDs, VCDs in Taguig /A18
▨ **8 factory workers** end up in hospital for food poisoning /A18
▨ **Two killed, 4 hurt** in Antipolo mishap /A18

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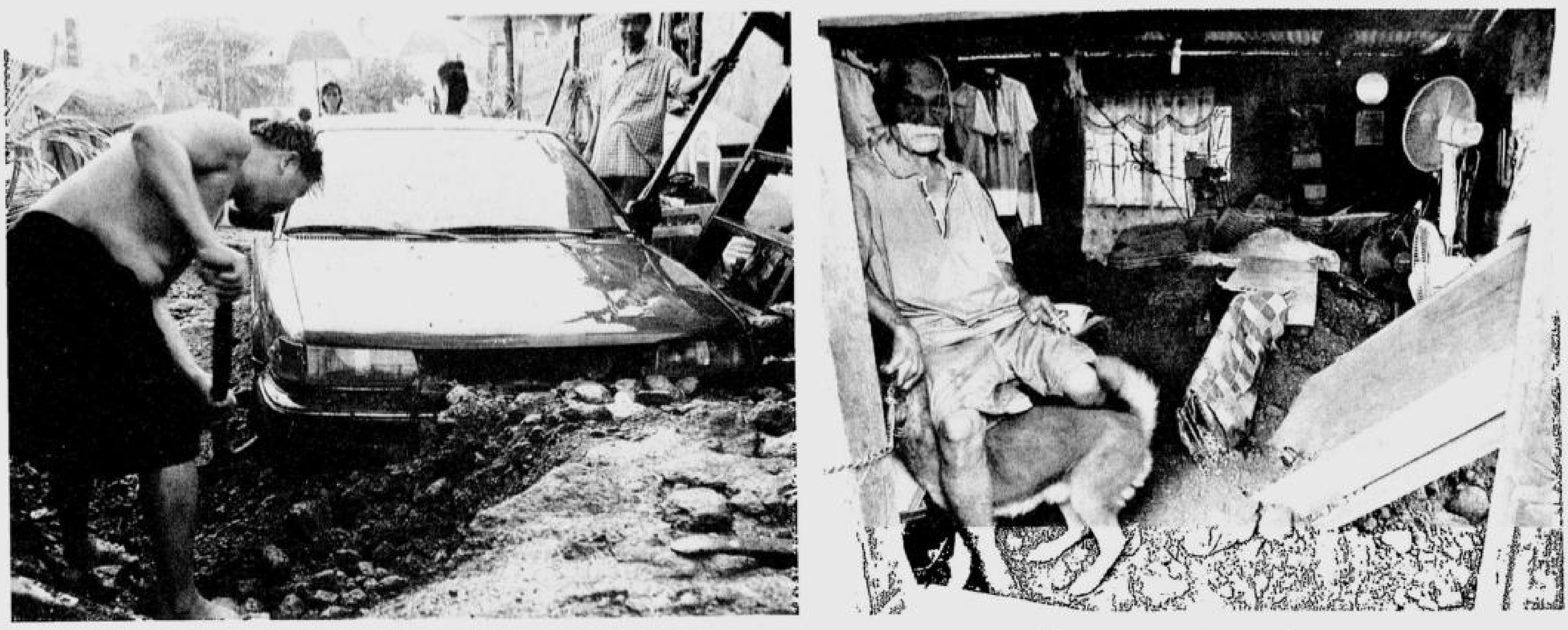


MAGDALENO Marang (far right) stands guard inside his daughter's home which was damaged when part of the perimeter wall in Pallar Area, Taguig City, collapsed over the weekend, sending mud rushing into some of the houses. The mudslide also buried two cars (right) and a bicycle. The Taguig government has asked residents in the area to leave but they have refused to do so.

JOAN BONDOC

Residents refuse to leave 'danger zone' in Taguig City

By Jocelyn R. Uy

THE TAGUIG CITY GOVERNMENT yesterday declared as a "danger zone" the area where part of a perimeter fence in Pallar Area, Barangay Western Bicutan collapsed over the weekend.

Around 10 meters of the 800-meter-long wall collapsed at around 3:30 p.m. last Saturday because of intermittent rains. The incident caused a mudslide that buried two cars, a bicycle and the houses of 23 families in knee-deep mud.

The families were ordered to evacuate to two covered courts in the same barangay, but they have refused to do so.

"Until now, they don't want to leave the place. As much as possible, we don't want to force them out of the area, but we are giving them two days to evacuate," said Paul Michael Vasquez, head of the Fort Bonifacio Satellite Government Center.

Other residents also refused to leave their homes despite a warning from the local government that other standing parts of the wall could also collapse, and not only damage their homes and properties but could also endanger their lives.

City Engineer Marcelo Serpajuan said the continuous rains had weakened the wall's foundation, leading to the collapse last Saturday.

A 20-meter portion of the wall also showed several cracks that could cause it to fall down in the event of a heavy downpour.

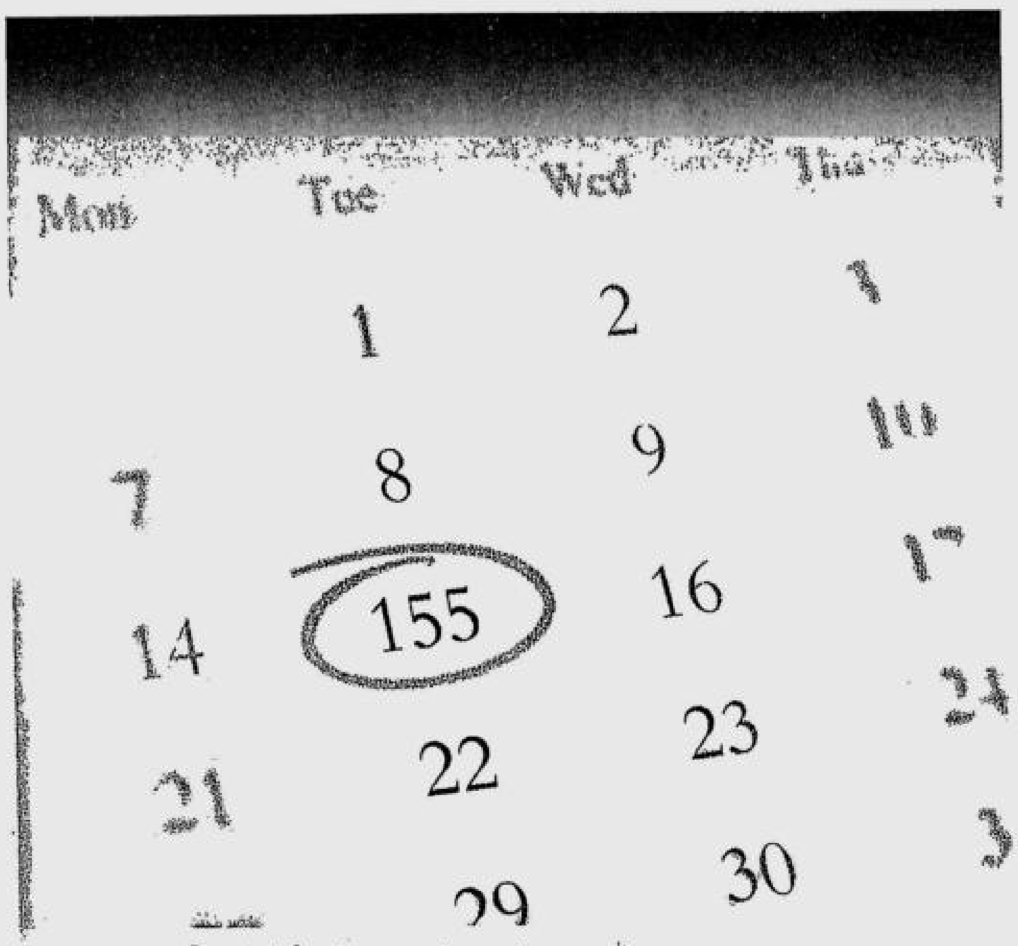
"It is crucial for residents to vacate the site to allow the city government to demolish the wall and carry out the necessary engineering work in the area to keep the place fit for settlement," Serpajuan said in a statement yesterday.

Serpajuan also wrote to Megaworld Corp., developer of the neighboring property, to immediately reconstruct the damaged wall.

The wall separates Pallar Area, a community of more than 100 families, from a privately owned lot in the barangay.

Mayor Freddie Tinga, meanwhile, said a public housing program would be implemented in the neighborhood to ensure the safety of the residents while work is being done to reinforce the perimeter wall leading to C-5 Road.

Vasquez said the project would only take about three to four weeks to complete. "For the meantime, we are asking residents to move to the evacuation centers we have provided for them," he added.



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8 food firm employees downed after mixing preservative in dish

By Tina G. Santos

EIGHT EMPLOYEES OF A FOOD processing company were rushed to the hospital early yesterday morning after eating food accidentally laced with sodium nitrite which they said they mistook for iodized salt.

Still under observation at the Philippine General Hospital in Taft Avenue, Manila were Bernie Guerina, Christian Mulleda, Ronaldo Baylon, Joey Catasio, Noli Lominuque, Don Angelo Labapia, Randy Daeta and Reynaldo Oliveros.

The victims, aged 19 to 31, are employees of VWA Food Processing located in Barangay St. Peter, Quezon City.

A doctor said the victims were taken to the PGH emergency room at around 1 a.m. after they complained of dizziness and abdominal pains which they experienced several hours after eating sardines for dinner.

The victims told doctors that they had seasoned their food with sodium nitrite, which they found in the cabinet.

They added that they mistook the ingredient for salt.

Sodium nitrite is a white powder-like substance commonly used to preserve meats, poultry and fish.

DID YOU KNOW

IN 1996, THE PHILIPPINE Senate vacated the National Museum building on P. Burgos St., Manila—its home since 1926—to give way to renovations for the celebration of the centennial of the Philippine Revolution in 1998. The Senate transferred to the Government Service Insurance System building along Roxas Boulevard. However, 10 of the senators—among them Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo, Franklin Drilon and the late Raul Roco—approved the transfer on the condition that the Senate would later relocate to a permanent site in Quezon City. A decade since the transfer, the Senate still holds office in the GSIS building.

Cyril L. Bonabente, PDI Research

OMB chair eyes terrorist angle in pirated CDs raid

By Nini Valera

THE DISCOVERY OF DRUGS AND bullets in boxes of pirated DVDs, VCDs, software CDs and other optical media products seized during a raid in Taguig City has led an official to believe that the illegal trade could be a cover-up for drug trafficking and even terrorist activities in the region.

This was according to Optical Media Board chair Edu Manzano, who led Thursday's raid on the house being rented by Roel Santos at Block 49, Lot 11, Taro-Taro Street in Maharlika Village, Bicutan.

Seized during the operation were several sachets of shabu, 230 live ammunition and two hand grenades which were hidden among boxes of pirated DVDs, VCDs and software.

Manzano said this was the first time illegal drugs and ammunition were found among seized counterfeit products during a raid by the OMB.

He added that the amount of pirated products seized was insignificant.

"It's the discovery of the drugs, bullets and hand grenades that makes this raid significant to us," he said.

"This is a shocking twist to our war against piracy. This means we're onto something bigger. It's not surprising that piracy could be a mere cover-up for bigger criminal activities," Manzano added.

He said there was a possibility that proceeds from the sale of pirated products were being used to finance terrorist activities in the region. But authorities have yet to come up with proof that this was happening.

Santos was not in the house during the raid. But the owners, Tating J. Nani and his wife, were present during the operation, although they denied any knowledge of their tenant's activities.

The raid was also witnessed by barangay chair Erlinda Pangandaman and kagawad Hadji Akmad D. Wahab.

The OMB has filed charges against Santos, Manzano said.

METROBRIEFS

2 dead in mishap

TWO PEOPLE were killed when a man lost control of his vehicle and ran over a 70-year-old pedestrian before ramming into four motorcycles the other night in Antipolo City. Police arrested Eduardo Masalinas, the driver of the Isuzu Highlander, who was driving "under the influence of alcohol," according to police. The incident happened on NHA Road in Barangay San Isidro at about 9 p.m. Monday. Desk officer PO1 Reynante Parto, citing a report from the police, said Masalinas suddenly lost control of his vehicle and first bumped into the rear portion of a Tamaraw FX. Masalinas sped off, but he accidentally ran over Alberto dela Cruz, 70, a retired soldier who was walking by. Masalinas then hit four motorcycles, killing Ferdinand Pelaez and causing serious injuries to Ronald Mona, Jerberth Caniga, Randy Fernandez and Jose Sebillo.

Edson C. Tandoc Jr.

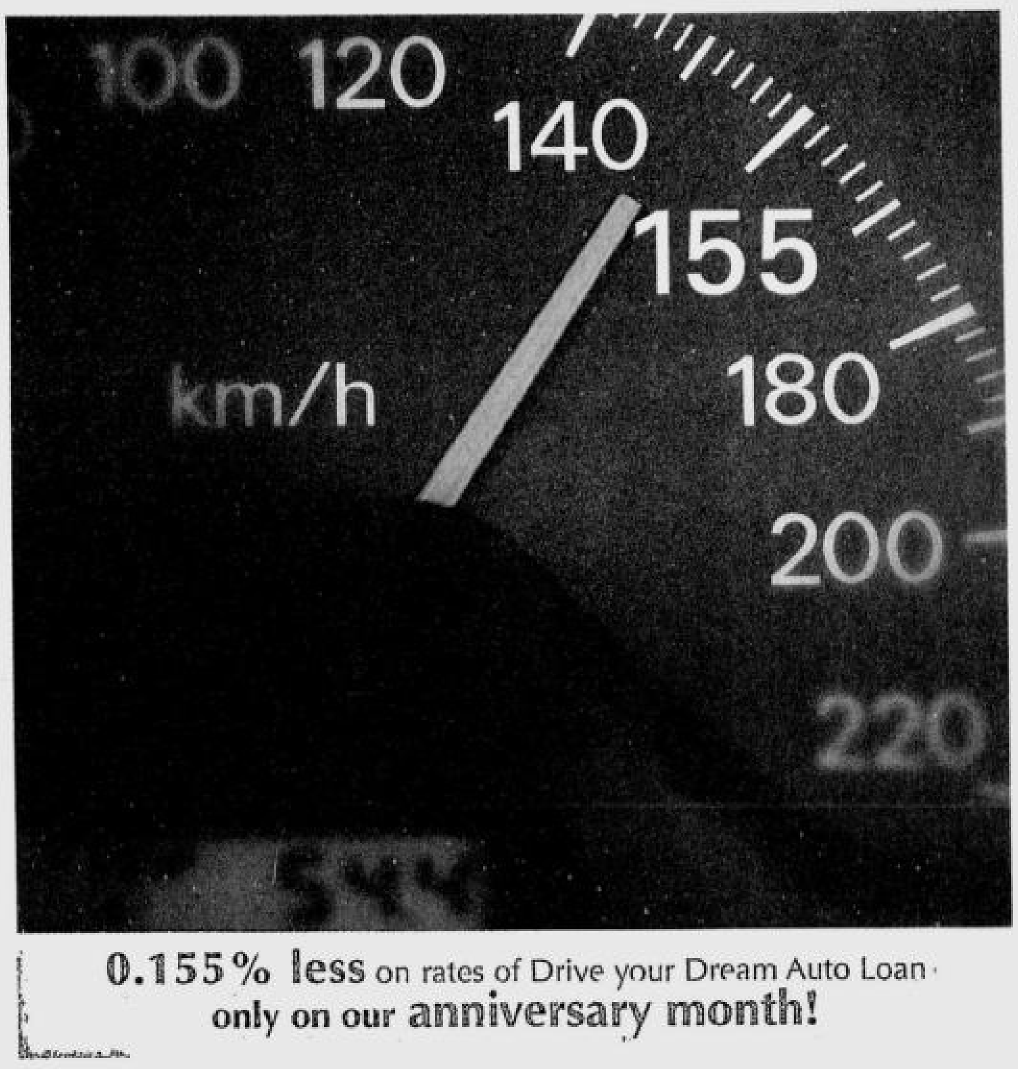
Life term for shabu

TWO MEN will spend up to 14 years in prison after they were convicted yesterday of possessing three plastic sachets of shabu or methamphetamine hydrochloride. Randy Cabalfin and Solomon Tagle were found guilty by a Quezon City court of violating the Comprehensive Dangerous Drugs Act through possession of 0.06 grams and 0.03 grams of shabu, respectively. Judge Severino de Castro Jr. of the Quezon City Regional Trial Court Branch 82 also ordered the two to pay a fine of P300,000 each. Court documents showed that Cabalfin and Tagle were seen by police operatives examining two plastic sachets with a white powdery substance on Aug. 7, 2003 on Steve Street, Barangay Commonwealth.

DJ Yap

'Kwentong Bayan'

THE SIMBAHANG Lingkod ng Bayan (SLB) of the Society of Jesus will hold "Kwentong Bayan," a forum on the Philippine political and socio-economic situation, at 1:30 p.m., Aug. 5, at the Loyola School of Theology, Ateneo de Manila campus in Loyola Heights, Quezon City. Resource persons will include Father Danny Huang, S.J., provincial superior of the Society of Jesus; Dr. Tony LaViña, dean of the Ateneo School of Government; and Dr. Dante Canlas, former head of the National Economic and Development Authority and now professor at the UP School of Economics. The forum is open to the public. Interested parties may contact the SLB at 426-5968 or slb@slb.ph.



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UN to Iran: Stop nuke program or else ...

UNITED NATIONS—THE UN SEcurity Council on Monday ordered Iran to halt its nuclear activities by Aug. 31 or face the threat of sanctions but the measure was immediately rejected by Tehran.

The resolution, passed by a 14-1 vote with Qatar in opposition, was welcomed by the United States and its allies, but decried as "destructive and totally unwarranted" by Iran's UN ambassador.

Resolution 1696 took the international community one step closer to a confrontation with Tehran that has been building for the past three years.

"The clock is now ticking," commented US ambassador to the United Nations John Bolton after leaving the council chamber.

The text expressed "serious concern" at Iran's refusal to comply with International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) orders to halt uranium enrichment and other work that could help build a nuclear bomb.

No immediate sanctions were set out. But IAEA director Mohammed ElBaradei will have to give a report on Iran's action by Aug. 31.

If Iran does not suspend its nuclear work, the council would consider adopting "appropriate measures" under Article 41 of Chapter 7 of the UN Charter, which could be economic and political sanctions.

Bolton told the Security Council that "Iran has consistently and brazenly defied the international community by continuing its pursuit of nuclear weapons." US President George W. Bush hailed what he called a "strong resolution." "It's a strong resolution. I want to thank our partners. This resolution follows up on the North Korea resolution," Bush said referring to action ordered against the Stalinist North after it fired seven missiles in early July.

Qatar was the only council member to oppose the Iran resolution, arguing it was too confrontational. "Do we really want to see another volcano erupting in this region," questioned Qatari Ambassador Nassir Abdulaziz al-Nasser.

The resolution was proposed by Britain, France and Germany, with strong US backing. All suspect Iran's nuclear program hides covert efforts to build a nuclear bomb, although Tehran says its research is for peaceful purposes.

Russia and China gave their backing, though both highlighted that there was no immediate threat of sanctions. Russian Ambassador Vitaly Churkin emphasized that even the next stage precluded any threat of military action.

Iran's ambassador, Javad Zarif, rebuffed the resolution in a long speech to the council, accusing the United States and its European allies of "imposing a destructive and totally unwarranted Security Council resolution." "I would suggest to you that this approach will not lead to any productive outcome. It can only exacerbate the situation," he told the council, adding that Iran was ready for "serious and non-discriminatory" negotiations.

. Iran had threatened Sunday to reject an offer of international economic and political incentives to stop its uranium enrichment if the Security Council passes the resolution.

But the ambassadors for Britain, France and Germany, which have led negotiations with Iran, emphasized that there was still a possibility to negotiate a settlement, and renewed calls for Tehran to accept the incentives package.

But there were already signs that the United States is preparing the sanctions.

US Under Secretary of State Nicholas Burns said Sunday the United States would seek to cut off "technologies that can help them further their enrichment and reprocessing activities.

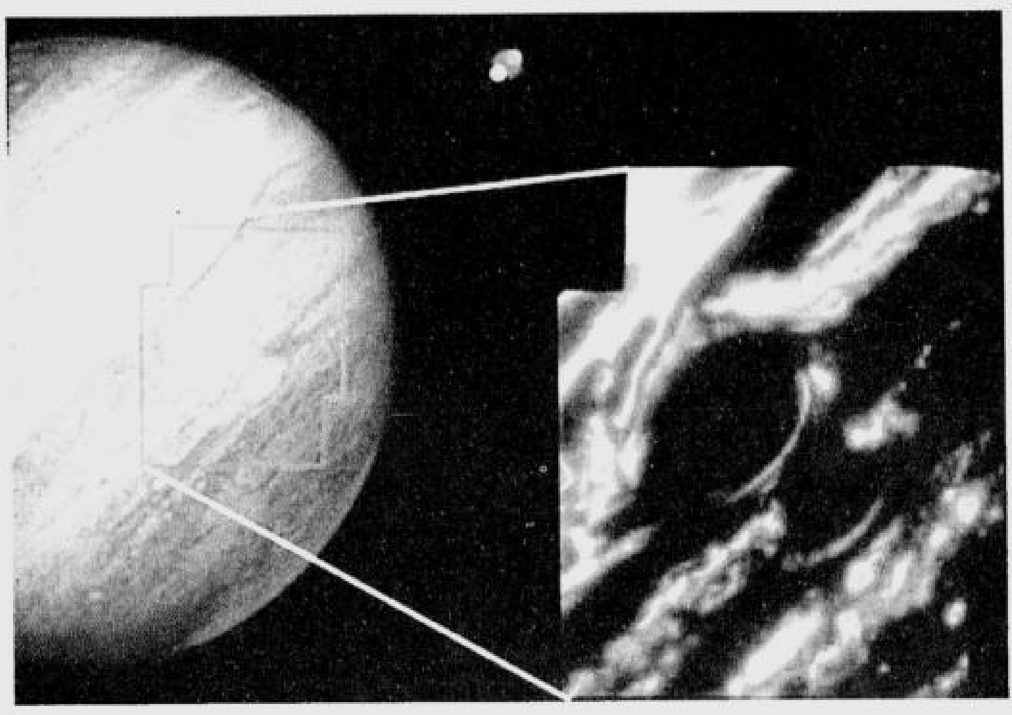
"We certainly would like to inhibit the ability of Iranians to travel, Iranian government officials, or for people to profit from our scientific and technological expertise," he added.

Iran has made several warnings about the impact of the resolution.

President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad said the new Middle East crisis in Lebanon would also have an effect on Iran's response to international pressure.

"The incidents in Lebanon and Palestine have influenced our examination" of the incentives offer, he said.

A prominent Iranian MP, Alaeddin Borujerdi, head of the parliamentary national security commission, warned that Iran could halt cooperation with IAEA inspectors and even quit the nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty. *AFP*


REUTERS

NEW SIGHTING: At left is a false-color composite near-infrared image of Jupiter and its moon Io, taken July 20 by the Keck II telescope on Mauna Kea using adaptive optics to sharpen the image. At right is a close-up of the two red spots through a 5-micron filter. Jupiter's Great Red Spot—a high-pressure storm on the big planet's surface—has been around for centuries, but astronomers on July 31 released images of the new, smaller Jovian storm they call Red Spot Jr.

9/11 attacks an "inside job," American professor claims

MADISON, WIS.—SIPPING ON A bottle of water and holding a book about the history and future of Islam, Kevin Barrett ticked off a few examples of what he saw as evidence that the Sept. 11 attacks had been an "inside job."

As children zoomed by on tricycles and shot basketballs at a community center near his home, Barrett, 47, described how some media outlets (the French daily newspaper Le Figaro and Radio France International, in fact) had reported that an agent from the CIA visited with Osama bin Laden two months before the attacks.

He also said fires could not have caused the collapse of the World Trade Center towers at free-fall speed, as reported by the special Sept. 11 commission.

"The 9/11 report will be universally reviled as a sham and a cover-up very soon," said Barrett, who has been a teacher's assistant or lecturer on Islam, African literature and other subjects at the University of Wisconsin, Madison, since 1996. "The 9/11 commission has its conspiracy theory, and we have ours."

Barrett's views, which he described on a conservative radio talk show in June, have outraged some Wisconsin legislators and generated a fierce debate about academic freedom on a campus long known as a haven for progressive ideologies and student activism.

"They apparently have no limits to what can be taught in the classroom," Rep. Steve Nass said of the university's decision to allow Barrett to teach a class this fall titled "Islam: Religion and Culture."

The university's chancellor, John D. Wiley, said that he was baffled by Barrett's beliefs but that they were irrelevant in the classroom, where he must stick to a syllabus that has been approved by the department. That syllabus includes a week devoted to the war on terror.

A 10-day university review had determined that Barrett presented a variety of viewpoints and that he had not discussed his personal opinions in the classroom, Wiley said.

Some Wisconsin students said they thought it was a crucial part of a college education to learn about a variety of theories, including radical ones, before forming opinions on a topic. *New York Times News Service*

WORLDBRIEFS

26 kidnapped in Baghdad

BAGHDAD—Armed men in Iraqi national police uniforms kidnapped 26 people on Monday from the Iraqi-American Chamber of Commerce and Industry and from a neighboring company, officials said. Riding in 15 jeeps of a kind used by police, the kidnappers descended on Al-Arassat Street in the commercial heart of Baghdad and led away the head of the chamber of commerce and 10 co-workers, an interior ministry source said. The group also took away 15 workers from a nearby office of the al-Rawi company which sells mobile telephones, he added. The raid took place in broad daylight at midday on a busy street. There was no indication that any Americans were among those taken. *AFP*

67 killed in Sri Lanka fighting

COLOMBO—Nineteen died in the bloodiest attack on Sri Lankan troops since a 2002 truce on Monday, taking the toll to 67 on a brutal day which also saw the deadliest ground battle since the ceasefire with Tamil rebels. While truce monitors denied Sri Lanka was slipping back to all-out war, military officials said 35 Tamil Tiger rebels were killed in the fierce fighting over a waterway in the north-eastern Trincomalee district. The 19 troops died on their way to the battle-ground late on Monday when a Claymore mine ripped through their bus, killing 10 instantly while nine were declared dead at hospital. Nine other troops had died earlier in the fighting backed by Israeli-built Kfir jets, the military said, adding that four more rebels died in a long-range attack in the island's northern Jaffna peninsula. *AFP*

Nato takes over Afghan south

KANDAHAR—A bomb in a police car killed at least eight Afghans on Monday as Nato forces took control of security in southern Afghanistan to begin one of the biggest ground operations in the alliance's history. The blast occurred in the eastern city of Jalalabad, far from the transfer-of-command ceremony on a base outside the southern city of Kandahar. Having handed over the south, the US-led coalition is expected to transfer responsibility for the east to Nato at the end of the year. The US general in charge of the coalition told ambassadors and military leaders from 37 countries at a formal handover ceremony in Kandahar that Taliban and al Qaida fighters could not defeat the combined Afghan and foreign forces. *Reuters*

Number of Iraqi refugees swells

BAGHDAD—Raging sectarian violence has pushed up the number of refugees in Iraq by 20,000 in the last 10 days alone, the migration ministry said on Monday. It said in a statement the total number of people displaced has reached 182,154. The crisis is likely to be far graver because ministry figures include only those who formally ask for aid within the country, some of them living in tented camps. By excluding thousands fleeing abroad or quietly seeking refuge with relatives, officials accept the data is an underestimate. *Reuters*

Protesters paralyze Mexico City

MEXICO CITY—THOUSANDS OF BACKERS OF Mexico's leftist presidential candidate Monday stepped up their protest against the July 2 vote, camping out in the streets of Mexico City and causing massive traffic jams.

Leftist Andres Manuel Lopez Obrador, who is challenging electoral results that gave victory to his conservative rival Felipe Calderon, led the protest from a yellow canvas tent on the downtown Zocalo square, facing the presidential palace.

He and his supporters spent the night camping out in a protest the politician said would continue until authorities agree to a recount of the votes cast in what he called a fraudulent election.

Many of the protesters pitched their tents along Reforma avenue, one of the city's main arteries, erecting an eight-kilometer blockade that caused massive traffic jams and turned parts of the megalopolis into pedestrian zones.

"Traffic has been paralyzed by the blockades, there are traffic jams in the entire city," said Fernando Puga, of the city's traffic support services.

Lopez Obrador, a fiery former Mexico City mayor, had called for the campaign during a massive rally in the capital on Sunday, which city authorities said brought together a record 1.2 million people. *AFP*

Mel Gibson caught drunk driving, hit for racist remarks

GIBSON

LOS ANGELES—Hollywood star Mel Gibson has checked into a rehabilitation program following his drunk driving arrest, as the controversy over his alleged anti-Semitic remarks during the incident continued to rage.

Police, meanwhile, denied Monday that it had attempted to cover up the alleged tirade against Jews by changing the original report of Friday's arrest in Malibu, a Los Angeles suburb.

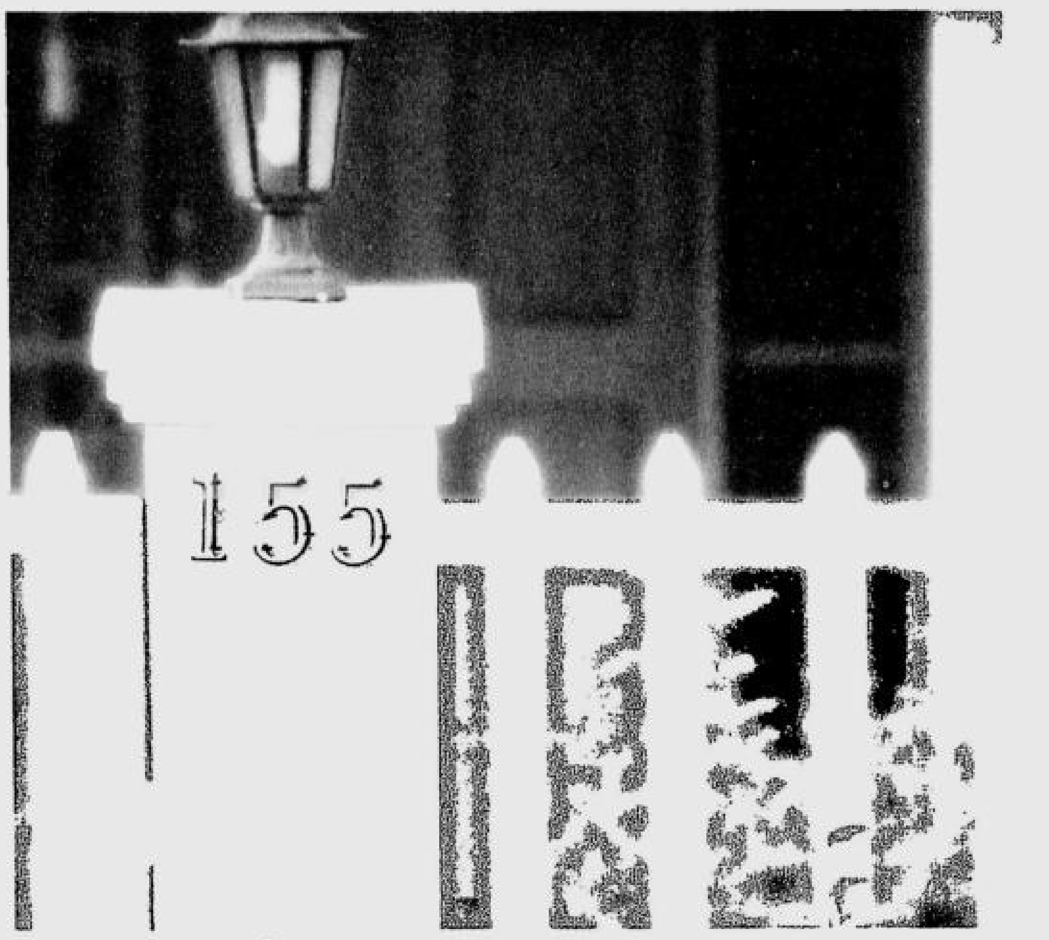
"Mel has entered into an ongoing program of recovery," publicist Alan Nierob said in a short statement made to AFP Monday.

He declined to provide any details about the program.

But it was Gibson's alleged remarks about Jews that have shocked the country and outraged Jewish groups. Hollywood observers and US media wondered if the controversy would hurt the 50-year-old star's career.

The TMZ.com celebrity website released a police report in which the devout Catholic director of the blockbuster "The Passion of the Christ" referred to "f...ing Jews" after his car was pulled over in the dawn hours Friday at twice the legal speed limit.

"The Jews are responsible for all the wars in the world," he was quoted as saying in the report after first asking the arresting police officer: "Are you a Jew?" *AFP*



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Israel ignores calls for ceasefire

Vows to rid area up to Litani River of Hezbollah

JERUSALEM—ISRAEL APPROVED the expansion of its ground offensive in Lebanon on Tuesday, dashing hopes of an early end to the three-week old conflict despite a renewed international push for a ceasefire.

"There is no ceasefire and there will be no ceasefire in the coming days," Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Olmert declared.

Israel's security cabinet gave the green light Tuesday to widen its ground offensive in the war on the Shiite Muslim Hezbollah that has killed well over 500 people and left much of Lebanon's infrastructure in ruins.

Lebanese television showed pictures of soldiers and tanks massed at the border, where Israeli bulldozers have started flattening Hezbollah positions to create a buffer zone.

Israel's security cabinet has given the army the green light to send ground forces up to 30 kilometers into southern Lebanon, a government official said Tuesday.

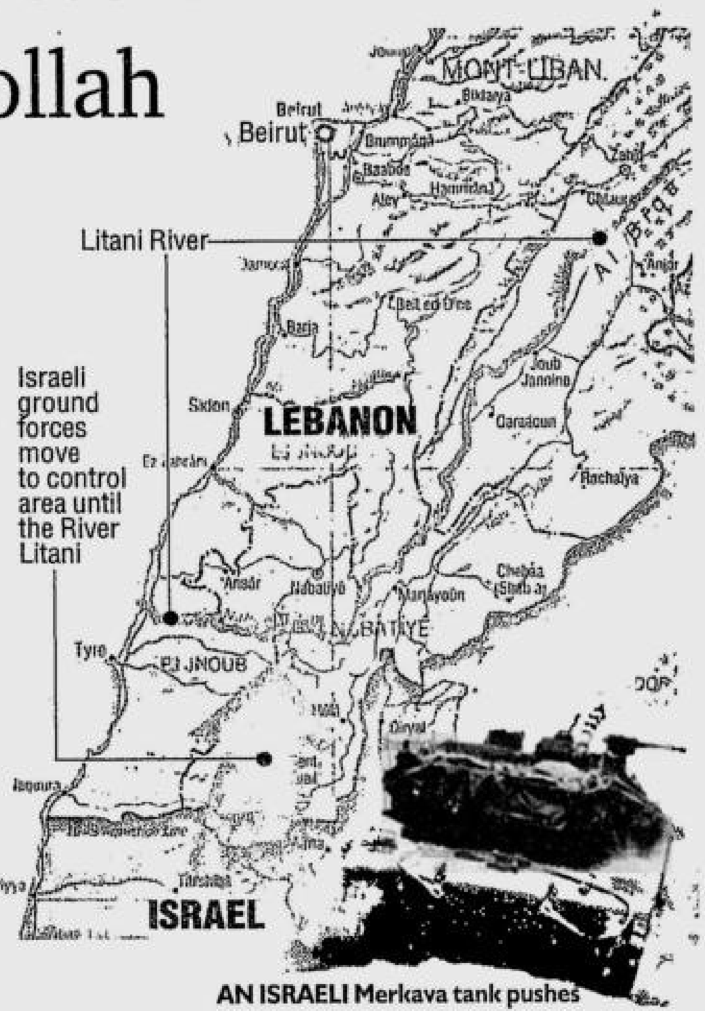
Following a four-hour meeting late Monday, the cabinet authorized military operations "with a view of controlling the area until the Litani River after having cleaned it of Hezbollah presence but without a permanent occupation," the official said on condition of anonymity.

Israel's border with Lebanon runs eastwards from the Mediterranean coast about 30 km south of the Litani, but moves much closer to the river as it turns north about 30 km inland.

Fierce fighting was also raging between Hezbollah guerrillas and advancing Israeli forces in an eastern border area of south Lebanon for the third straight day, Lebanese police said.

The Israeli troops made a small advance of about one kilometer on the ground, they said.

Despite a promised 48-hour halt in air raids which allowed thousands of southern Lebanese to flee the war zone, Israeli warplanes also struck roads leading to Syria in the early hours of Tuesday, police said.



AN ISRAELI Merkava tank pushes into southern Lebanon during continued military operations in the area. AFP

INQFOGRAPHIC: ESAMBO

Syria, which along with Iran, backs Hezbollah, ordered its armed forces to raise their level of alert, official media reported.

Olmert warned that Israel's war on Hezbollah, unleashed on July 12 after Shiite Muslim fighters seized two soldiers in a deadly border raid, would end only when the group ceased to be a threat.

"We will end it when the threat over our heads is removed, when our kidnapped soldiers return to their homes and when we can live in security," Olmert said.

As the fighting looked set to intensify, diplomatic efforts to reach a ceasefire gathered pace after an Israeli attack on the Lebanese village of Qana on Sunday killed 52 people, mainly women and children, and triggered international outrage.

Qana, where Jesus Christ is said to have turned water into wine, achieved martyr status after an Israeli attack on a UN base there in 1996 killed 105 people, and the new raid prompted an outpouring of anger around the world.

The five permanent UN Security Council members—Britain, China, France, Russia and the United States—held their first official consultations to prepare a resolution on the war, although there has still been no formal call for a ceasefire.

Ambassadors from the five major countries were also due to meet with UN Secretary General Kofi Annan Tuesday.

US Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice flew back to Washington on Monday after a weekend visit to Israel overshadowed by the carnage in Qana, saying she was convinced that "an urgent ceasefire and a lasting settlement" could be achieved this week.

The plans center on the deployment of an international force in south Lebanon but Israel has warned that any halt to its offensive into southern Lebanon would allow Hezbollah guerrillas to regroup and rearm.

Olmert had however told her that his army would need another 10 days to 12 weeks to cripple Hezbollah, which has been a thorn in Israel's side for years.

"If there is an immediate ceasefire, the extremists will immediately rear their heads," Defense Minister Amir Peretz told a stormy parliament session.

Encouraged by the temporary halt in air bombardments, however brief, tens of thousands of villagers fled southern Lebanon, the Hezbollah heartland which has borne the brunt of the onslaught.

Carrying piles of luggage, mattresses and blankets on car roofs or pickup trucks, people streamed from mountain villages toward the coastal highway leading north to Beirut.

Lebanon was in mourning after what many in the Arab world were calling the Qana "massacre," the biggest single loss of life since Israel unleashed its firepower on its northern neighbor. *AFP*

Republic of the Philippines
ZAMBOANGA CITY WATER DISTRICT
Pilar Street, Zamboanga City

SECTION 1. INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

The Zamboanga City Water District, through its Bids and Awards Committee I (BAC I), invites Suppliers/Manufacturers to apply for eligibility and to bid for the hereunder project:

LOT NO.	BRIEF DESCRIPTION	APPROVED BUDGET FOR THE CONTRACT (ABC)	COST OF BID DOCUMENTS	DATE OF ISSUANCE OF BID DOCUMENTS	DATE OF PRE-BID CONFERENCE	DATE OF SUBMISSION/ OPENING OF BIDS
1	WATER METER ½"Ø FOR NEW TAPPING	P 770,500.00	P 700.00	July 31 to August 4, 2006	August 10, 2006	August 22, 2006
2	75mmØ x 6m PVC PIPE, CLASS 150, B/S W/ R. FOR INSTALLATION OF FEEDERLINE@EL PASO DRIVE CANELAR MORET, ZC	P 190,674.00	P 500.00	July 31 to August 4, 2006	August 10, 2006	August 22, 2006
3	WATER METER, ½"Ø x 100mm LONG FOR REPLACEMENT OF NON-FUNCTIONING WATER METER	P 1,600,000.00	P 1,000.00	July 31 to August 4, 2006	August 10, 2006	August 22, 2006

Bidding will be conducted through open competitive bidding procedures using non-discretionary pass/fail criteria as specified in the Implementing Rules & Regulations Part A (IRR-A) of Republic Act 9184 (R.A. 9184), otherwise known as the Government Procurement Reform Act, and is restricted to organizations with at least sixty percent (60%) interest of outstanding capital stock belonging to citizens of the Philippines, as specified in Republic Act 5183 (R.A. 5183). Only Bids from Bidders who pass the eligibility check will be opened. The process of the Eligibility check is described in Section II of the Bidding Documents, ITB. The bidder with lowest calculated bid (LCB) shall be advance to the post-qualification stage in order to finally determine its responsiveness to the technical and financial requirements of the project. The contract shall be then awarded to the Lowest Calculated and Responsive Bidder (LCRB) who was determined as such during the post-qualification procedure.

Interested Bidders may obtain further information from the ZAMBOANGA CITY WATER DISTRICT and inspect the Bidding documents at the address given below during office hours (8:00-5:00 pm).

All Bids must be accompanied by a *Bid Security in the form of Cash, Certified Check, Cashier's and Manager's Check in the amount of Seven Thousand Seven Hundred Five Pesos (P7,705.00) for Lot 1, One Thousand Nine Hundred Six Pesos & Seventy-Four Centavos (P1,906.74) for Lot 2, and Fifteen Thousand Pesos (P15,000.00) for Lot 3.* Late Bids shall not be accepted.

Bid Opening shall be at the 2nd Floor, ZAMBOANGA CITY WATER DISTRICT Main Office Building, Pilar St., Zamboanga City. Bids will be opened in the presence of the Bidder's representatives who choose to attend at the address below.

The ZAMBOANGA CITY WATER DISTRICT reserves the right to accept or reject any Bid, and to annul the bidding process and reject all Bids at any time or prior to contract award, without thereby incurring any liability to the affected Bidder or Bidders.

ZAMBOANGA CITY WATER DISTRICT
Mr. Noel M. Kawaguchi
Pilar St., Zamboanga City 7000
Telephone No. : (062) 991-1556
Email
Fax (062) 991-2799

(Sgd.) ARNULFO A. ALFONSO
BAC I Chairman

(PDI–August 2, 2006)

DITO NA KAMI
NATIONAL FOOD AUTHORITY
Philippine Sugar Center Building
North Avenue, Diliman, Quezon City

OFFICE	TELEPHONE NO.
Office of the Administrator	928-1634/455-5274
Secretary (AO)	926-6493
Special Assistant	455-6085
Office of the Deputy Administrator for Finance and Administration	920-8564/454-9480
Office of the Deputy Administrator for Operation	426-5063
Office of the Assistant Administrator for Industry Development	920-7692
Council Secretary	454-4419
Office of the Assistant Administrator for Stabilization	426-0569/454-1344
Office of the Assistant Administrator for Administration	455-0083/426-6934 (FAX)
Office of the Assistant Administrator for Finance	426-6932/454-1736
Department of Public Affairs	928-0721
Enforcement and Investigation, Prosecution Department	927-9787
Department for Treasury, Budget and Fund Management	454-7747/920-2794
General Services Directorate	927-4862/454-2113
General Services Directorate (Purchasing Division)	920-8069/454-2168/454-2408
General Services Directorate (Communication Services Division)	454-0254/927-7189 455-1123/455-1030
Bids Awards Committee	455-2758
Management Services Department	455-7819
Legal Affairs Department	454-1022
Department for Marketing Operations	
Operations Coordination Division	454-1214
Foreign Operations Division	4541890
Asset Management Office	454-1658
Pool of Hearing Officers	454-2105
Human Resources Department	454-2448/454-2690
Technical Services Department	454-3096
Extension Department	454-3294
Enforcement, Investigation and Prosecution Department	454-1527
Accounting Services Department	454-4603
Commsion on Audit	454-7615
Internal Audit Department	454-3334
Business Development and Promotions Department	454-5930
Business Regulations Department	454-9321
Corporate Planning Department	454-9408

Text NFA: 0917-6210927

Republic of the Philippines
Metro Roxas Water District
MRWD Bldg., Km. 1, Roxas City 5800, Philippines
Tel. # (036) 6210-737 / 6210-044 / 6215-474
Telefax # (036) 6216-083

BIDS AND AWARDS COMMITTEE

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID
No. 007-06

The METRO ROXAS WATER DISTRICT (MRWD), through its Bids and Awards Committee (BAC), invites suppliers/manufacturers/distributors/contractors to apply for eligibility and to bid for the hereunder project:

Name of Project : CONTRACT FOR THE SECURITY SERVICES
Location : MRWD MAIN BUILDING, SUB-STATION AND TREATMENT PLANTS
Brief Description : SECURITY GUARD TO PROTECT & SAFEGUARD THE FOLLOWING PROPERTIES:
1. MRWD Main Building, KM. 1, Roxas City (6 Guards)
2. Water Treatment Plant, Arcabalo, Roxas City (3 Guards)
3. Paslang Pumping Station, Salocon, Panitan, Capiz (3 Guards)
4. Bahit Treatment Plant, Panitan, Capiz (3 Guards)
5. Arcabalo Sub-Station (3 Guards)
Approved Budget for the Contract : Php2,108,800.00
Source of Funding : MRWD OPERATING EXPENSES
Contract Duration : One (1) year Calendar Days

The Eligibility Check / Screening as well as the Preliminary Examination of Bids shall use non-discretionary "pass/fail" criteria. Only Bids from Bidders who pass the eligibility check will be opened. Post-qualification of the lowest calculated bid shall be conducted.

All particulars relative to Eligibility Statement and Screening, Bid Security, Performance Security, Pre-Bid Conference(s), Evaluation of Bids, Post-Qualification and Award of Contract shall be governed by the pertinent provisions of R.A. 9184 and its Implementing Rules and Regulations A (IRR-A).

The schedule of activities is listed, as follows:

Activities	*Schedule*
1. Advertisement	July 31-August 14, 2006
2. Issuance of Bid Documents	August 15-28, 2006
3. Pre-Bid Conference	August 28, 2006 @ 10:00 am
4. Pre-qualification conference	September 14, 2006 @ 10:00 am
5. Deadline for Submission of Bids	September 14, 2006 @ 10:00 am
6. Opening of Bids	September 14, 2006 @ 10:00 am
7. Bid Evaluation	September 16, 2006
8. Post-qualification	September 18, 2006
9. Notice of Award	September 20, 2006

1. Must have a reserved list of Security Personnel readily available for MRWD.
2. Must be a PADPAO Member
3. Must have a sub office in Roxas City.
4. A complete set of Bidding Documents may be purchased by interested Bidders from the address below and upon payment of a non-refundable amount of Php1,000.00 to the METRO ROXAS WATER DISTRICT. The Bidding Documents shall be received personally by the prospective Bidder or his authorized representative.

The METRO ROXAS WATER DISTRICT assumes no responsibility whatsoever to compensate or indemnify bidders for any expenses incurred in the preparation of the bid.

Approved by:

(Sgd.) GONZALO GLEN B. DELGADO
BAC Chairman

(PDI–August 2 & 9, 2006)

BI SP

INVITATION TO BID

Motorcycles

The Belgian Integrated Agrarian Reform Programme (BIARSP) is a bilateral development programme between the Governments of the Philippines and Belgium. Its aim is to assist the Department of Agrarian Reform (DAR) to successfully complete the Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Program (CARP).

BIARSP is currently on its third and final phase of implementation. BIARSP is regarded as an important programme for agrarian reform. It is highly regarded for its integrated approach covering not only agricultural support services but also education, public health and institutional capacity building.

To further strengthen the programme's implementation, BIARSP supports its lead partner agency, the DAR, in upgrading its transportation complement by providing Motorcycles for selected DAR Regional, Provincial and Municipal Offices of Region 7 & 9.

The BIARSP-Technical Support and Coordination Office (TSCO) therefore invites eligible companies to bid for one hundred thirty-eight (138) units motorcycles (99 units automatic and 39 units manual transmission) in full or in batches. The equipment shall be delivered to the four (4) provinces of Region VII and the four (4) provinces of Region IX.

Interested parties are invited to visit www.biarsptsco.org (OPPORTUNITIES – Tenders) for the specifications as well as delivery destinations for the said equipment. Please submit proposed technical document with information such as company profile, proposed budgetary requirements, through any of the following:

E-mail : tsco@biarsptsco.org
Post : BIARSP – TSCO, 2nd Floor Sol Y Mar Bldg., Cor. Rizal Blvd. – San Juan Street, Dumaguete City, Negros Oriental
Fax : (035) 422-7736

For further queries, please get in touch with Mary Marlyn C. Llosa, Administrative Officer, at telephone #s: (035) 225-5929; 225-5930; 225-8681; and 422-7459.

Interested parties are advised to submit their documents not later than September 4, 2006.

(PDI–August 2 & 6, 2006)

WHAT'S INSIDE

Pacquiao-Morales on; stiff fines for excess weight /A23

E-mail: pr_sports@inquirer.com.ph

SPORTS

Editor **Teddyvic S. Melendres**

Text us your feedback: inquirer sprt name/age/city/message to 2207 (Globe) or 283 (Smart)

Landis' sample shows synthetic testosterone /A24

RUDY Hatfield will be welcomed at Ginebra when he comes back.

Coke not disbanding

PBA board to scrutinize disputed 3-team trade

By June Navarro and Francis Ochoa

THE CONTROVERSIAL THREE-WAY TRADE involving eight players recently is tops on the agenda of the Philippine Basketball Association board of governors' meeting tomorrow.

And, although it may seem that the deal is a natural consequence of a squad about to disband, PBA commissioner Noli Eala looks at it as an exception to that unwritten rule.

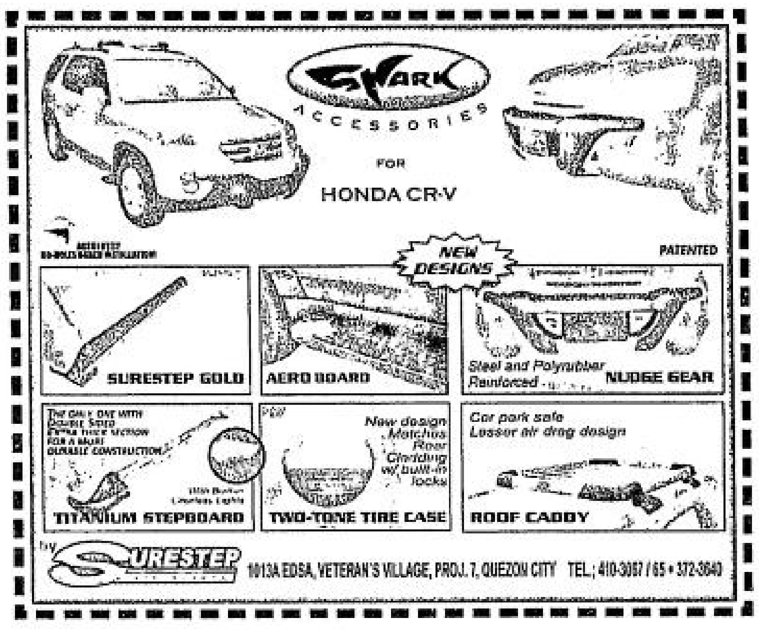
Newly installed PBA chair Ricky Vargas will have his baptism of fire when the former Talk 'N Text governor presides over his first emergency board meeting to tackle the validity of the trade involving Barangay Ginebra, Coca-Cola and Air21.

Ginebra and Coca-Cola swapped players using Air21 as the bridge since teams under the San Miguel Corp. umbrella are prohibited from directly trading their players.

What sparked the controversy was the alleged disparity of the trade. The Kings came out the biggest winner after snaring Rafi Reavis and Billy Mamaril from the Tigers.

Aside from Reavis and Mamaril, the Kings also acquired the rights to

COKE/ A22



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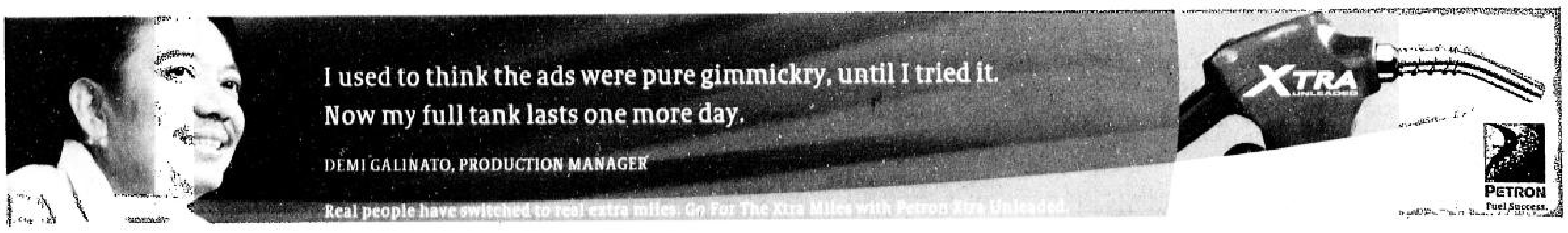

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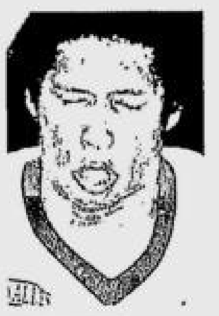
Williams cleared, but not 2 other Fil-Ams

By Francis Ochoa

WILLIAMS



DA VANCE

KELLY WILLIAMS, ONE OF THE TOP amateurs seeking a stint in the Philippine Basketball Association, has been cleared to join the rookie draft, but two other highly touted Fil-Ams may have to wait next year for their turn.

PBA commissioner Noli Eala sounded optimistic that Williams would be eligible for the draft after his office received word from the justice department that the Magnolia standout's documents have already been approved.

"We've heard from Williams' handlers that his papers are OK," said Eala.

But PBL Unity Cup Most Valuable Player Joe da Vance and Rob Reyes, two blue-chip players who could easily land among the top five rookie picks, are in danger of missing the draft after both failed to comply with the league's requirements.

"I don't think they (Da Vance and Reyes) are going to make it," said Eala.

Their absence is going to seriously alter the depth of the pool, especially for the teams in the lower part of the draft, according to coach Tim Cone, whose Alaska squad will be picking seventh.

It could also force teams with options to deal away their first-round selections so they could take a second look at the draft tentatively set on Aug. 20.

"All of a sudden, the draft is leaner and the players we would have wanted at No. 9 might go earlier," said Purefoods coach Ryan Gregorio, who has the option to assign his No. 9 pick to Red Bull by virtue of an earlier trade.

Cone said that several coaches have been waiting for word on the three Fil-Ams' eligibility. The absence of Da Vance and Reyes could affect the teams in the lower section of the draft two ways, he added.

"First, it denies the teams up there [in the draft] the chance to get quality talent like Da Vance and Rob Reyes and gives teams in the lower part of the draft the chance to grab them maybe next year," said Cone.

"But on the other hand, the draft pool has suddenly become thin and leaves very little options for the teams in the lower part of the pool," said Cone.

Sta. Lucia picks first in the draft and the Realtors look headed toward tabbing Arwind Santos in keeping with the franchise's honored tradition of selecting only pure Filipino talents.

Coca-Cola stays; PBA looking into 3-way trade

From page A21

Rudy Hatfield, a former national player whose status as a foreigner with Filipino roots is under question. He is currently in the US.

Two teams that previously engaged in one-sided deals have already folded, sparking rumors that Coca-Cola is headed in the same direction.

Just before leaving the league last year, Shell dealt Rich Alvarez and Tony dela Cruz to Alaska practically for a song, while Tanduay, which disbanded and sold its franchise to Air21, traded Erik Menk and Dondon Hontiveros for almost nothing in return.

"But this is hardly any reason to immediately concede that the trade is an offshoot of Coca-Cola's decision to disband," Eala said in yesterday's PSA Forum at the Pantalan Restaurant in Manila. "The team has told us already that it will continue to stay in the league and that it will not disband."

Besides, Eala added, teams wanting to disband have to file a notice three months before the start of the season. Coca-Cola hasn't forwarded any such notice.

Reports have it that the franchise will merely switch product lines— instead of Coca-Cola, another SMC-owned company will take over— and Eala said this is not a form of disbanding.

'Nothing but gossip'

Eala also said that an "SMC big shot" had told him he got the assurance of Bobby Huang, Coca-Cola's main pillar on the brand's international standing, that all the talk about the Tigers disbanding is "nothing but gossip."

Eala added that recent deals that seemed like one-sided benefited the teams involved because "they found the perfect fit."

This latest deal, though, is expected to go under heavy scrutiny by the PBA board.

The Tigers got Kalani Ferreria and Manny Ramos from the Kings on top of two second-round picks this year and a future first-rounder.

As conduit, the Express settled for the 6-foot-7 Ervin Sotto and Aris Dimaunahan while unloading Ryan Bernardo to the Tigers.

"What the board essentially wants is to get a clear picture on how the negotiations went," said Vargas, the new board chair.

The trade has been questioned by officials from other teams, who claimed that crowd-favorite Ginebra benefited the most from the trade.

"We will use all existing and applicable rules here," said Eala. "If the trade conformed to the rules, then it will be approved."

Chot takes over SMB; Uichico goes to Ginebra

By Francis Ochoa

COACH CHOT REYES' ASSUMPTION OF THE San Miguel Beer head coaching duties is expected to be formalized today after the issue of the assistant coaches has been sorted out.

Reyes is taking over the head-coaching duties of the Beermen, replacing multititled mentor Jong Uichico, who won all his five championships with San Miguel Beer.

Uichico will take the helm at the Ginebra bench with former coach Siot Tanquingcen sliding down to the role of assistant.

While details are still sketchy on how the assistants will be shuffled off, it looks like Art dela Cruz will also move to Ginebra as Reyes is expected to bring in his old assistants at Coca-Cola—Biboy Ravanes and Aboy Castro—with him to San Miguel.

Reyes is still in Qatar coaching the national team in a four-team invitational tournament and could not be reached. Uichico was supposed to have arrived yesterday from an overseas vacation but he still was not available for comment.

With the Ginebra coaching staff full, San Miguel assistants Boybits Victoria and Richie Ticzon are likely to be transferred to Coca-Cola under Binky Favis, sources said.

The issue of where the assistant coaches of the three teams under the San Miguel Corp. umbrella should go has prevented the early announcement of the coaching changes.

Meanwhile, PBA commissioner Noli Eala said yesterday it will only act on the Alex Cabagnot case depending on the recommendation of Sta. Lucia, which is trying to handle the matter internally.

"We are in the offseason so we really cannot act officially on this as an office until Sta. Lucia requests us to do so," Eala told the INQUIRER.

Sta. Lucia has already decided to sanction Cabagnot, who has gone AWOL (absent without leave) on the Realtors for the second time in his first full season in the league. Cabagnot surfaced in a summer league tournament in the US, where his team played against the Talk 'N Text Phone Pals.

Team manager Ariel Magno told the INQUIRER Sunday that it was withholding Cabagnot's salary until the cager reports back to the team. The Realtors opened up practice last Monday.

The other day, Sta. Lucia management officially suspended the cager after he failed to submit his explanation within the prescribed 72 hours issued by the Realtors management in a memo.

SELFLESS: Erstwhile San Miguel Beer coach Jong Uichico.

Hail the 2nd placer, but what about the 4-gold winner?

BARE EYE

Recah Trinidad

MANALO NATALO. NOT TO BE MEAN, BUT that would have been a perfect banner head for yesterday's tabloid sports pages.

After a streak of brilliance, the player with the winner's name (Manalo) lost the dollar-rich final match.

But except for failing to bag the main pot of $350,000, the biggest in pool lore, there was little else to regret on Marlon Manalo's part. His slim 8-7 loss to Thorsten Hohmann in the International Pool Tour Open 8-Ball championship in Las Vegas will go down as one of the finer performances by a Filipino athlete this year.

Manalo did pocket $90,000, about P5 million, but the triumphant German pool shark, winner of the 2003 World Pool Championship in Cardiff, Wales, was not trying to be cute when he declared that Manalo of the Philippines was equally deserving (of the title.)

* * *

Manalo was never lacking in skills and steadiness. But, in the end, Lady Luck deserted the RP pool star who registered the best finish among his countrymen at the World Pool Championship (WPC) in Kaohsiung last year.

He was ahead, 7-6, and was breaking for the clinching eighth win.

Manalo, however, went blank, thereby allowing Hohmann to clean up (7-all), before the sharp German scored on his turn at break and went all the way for the clincher.

With his latest feat, Manalo will expectedly be among the feared top locals when the country hosts in November the WPC, a very prestigious event that will hopefully get solid backing from all sectors.

* * *

Manalo's feat did not touch off any national celebration but, just the same, he did make Pinoy sports fans happy and proud.

Now, come to think of it, what about the great feats of this young archer, winner of two gold medals (individual and team) in the last Southeast Asian Games, who did not merit a single line of notice upon her return with four gold medals from a major tournament in Malaysia last month?

The father of this lady archer claimed they had nothing against the media, but he's endlessly puzzled by the suspicious silence on the part of the national archery association.

The name of this talented winner will have to be temporarily withheld upon the request of the father.

* * *

But here's the strange story: This archer fell and injured her right arm after her two-gold effort in last year's Southeast Asian Games.

She was sidelined but, soon enough, she was back training on her own under her Korean coach.

Meanwhile, a national team was being formed for that big tournament in Malaysia last month.

Now, when she applied with her officials and coaches, they turned down her request to be included in the Malaysian expedition.

Well, to make the long story short, she paid her way to the Kuala Lumpur tournament, registered, competed.

* * *

The way the father told it, his daughter finished with four gold medals, obviously the best output by a Filipino in that Malaysian tilt.

"She spent her incentive money from the SEA Games to compete in Malaysia; she has proven her point," the father was quoted by a friend as saying.

From what has been said, that RP delegation was heavy with free-loaders, some of them suburban municipal officials.

There's also this fear that national archery association officials may be made to explain bigger sins once this stinking boo-boo about the archer—whom they had rejected but, just the same, paid her way and showed the way for the RP team—is unearthed.

The four archery gold medals did not merit a mention, but it may yet result into an inquiry.

SPORTSWATCH

Manalo out to avenge IPT defeat

FILIPINO MARLON MANALO TRIES TO GET BACK AT GERMAN THORSTEN Hohmann when he competes in the winner-take-all $50,000 9-ball event dubbed as Challenge of Champions on Aug. 9-10 at the Mohegan Sun Casino in Uncasville, Connecticut. The 30-year-old Manalo bowed to Hohmann, 8-7, in the 2006 North American Open finals on Monday, settling for the runner-up purse of $99,000 in the International Pool Tour event held in Las Vegas, Nevada. "*Gaganti ako kay Thorsten sa* The Challenge of Champions (I'll get back at Thorsten in The Challenge of Champions)," said Manalo. In the 2005 IPT 8-ball King of the Hill shoot-out in Orlando, Florida, Manalo beat Hohmann twice. That event was topped by Efren "Bata" Reyes, who dumped American Mike Sigel in the finals for the $200,000 first prize. ***Marlon Bernardino, Contributor***

San Juan 4-cocker kicks off today

COCKFIGHTING ENTHUSIASTS CONVERGE TODAY AT THE SAN JUAN COLiseum for the "Pahabol Sa Taglugon" 4-cock derby, the last big cockfest of the season. The first of 100 fights in the derby sponsored by Sagupaan Complex-or 3000 starts at 2 p.m. Seeing action are entries of Patrick Antonio, Pol Estrellado, former Sen. Ramon Revilla, boxing champ Manny Pacquiao, Nato Lacson, Boy Marzo, Reps. Gerry "Boy" Espina, Butch Pichay and Conrado Estrella, Rene Medina, Max Roxas, Wakee Salud, Louie Cua, Rudy Albano, George Fajardo, Paeng Arciaga, Anthony Lim, Mario Garcia, among others. "This will be an exciting battle of champions," said Bobbit Ples, who is hosting the derby for the 19th straight year. For inquiries, call 725-6563 or 725-5369.

RACING TIPS

BY TOP CHOICE

Race 1—Coeur D'Honneur (2), Royal Lady (5), Red Fancy (4), Lala Clipper (1)
Race 2—(Super 6/Qrt/Tri)—Cheers (3), Carmelita (9), Interceptor (2), Divine Diva/House of Riches (7), Tervalac (6), Bold Water (11)
Race 3—(Penta/Qrt/Tri)—Whilly Nilly (6), Ideal Gaze (8), Toxic Water (9), Noble Scholar (4), Nature Chef (3)
Race 4—(Qrt/Tri)—Air Force One (6), Zaniga (3), Angie Gray (5), Mes Monique (1)
Race 5—(Penta/Qrt/Tri)—Primo Supremo (9), Pasirit (6), Spoiler (8), Ravensworth (2), Ocean Dignity (1)
Race 6—(Qrt/Tri)—Sovereign Dancer (7), Wing-Away (4), Morning Glory (2), Dalidali (3)
Race 7—(Penta/Qrt/Tri)—Fly Aday Fly (4), Yankee Clipper (7), Bomb Shell (2), Reign of Fire (9), Brute Force (1)
Race 8—(Super 6/Qrt/Tri)—Virgin Island (8), Valid Hazm (14), Open Sky (5), Remus (3), Kimagure (7), Do It David (12)

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NISSAN

New PBA chair bares year-long program

IN HUDDLE

Beth Celis

IT WAS NOT THE MOST ideal time for newly installed PBA chair Ricky Vargas to return my phone call.

I had just stepped out of the hardware store, lugging construction materials which I was about to load into the trunk of my car.

After several days of waiting, Ricky was now ready to reveal the blueprint of his year-long program for the league.

Although I didn't have writing implements at hand, I could not afford to further delay the long overdue interview.

I was excited to know about the plans of the man who is currently senior vice president for human resource of PLDT, the nation's No. 1 business entity; chair of Tahanan, and member of the board of directors of EPLDT, PLDT Global, Mediaquest, Beneficial Trust Fund and NBC.

With so much responsibilities, it was so difficult to pin down Ricky even for just a short interview.

I crossed my fingers that my usually unreliable memory would retain everything Ricky had to say.

* * *

Over the phone, the new PBA chair bared the four-point plan which he did not lay out in any specific order.

To start with, Ricky said he aims to make the league affordable to the majority.

"I want our ticket prices to be competitive with the other less costly forms of entertainment like, for example, the movies," Ricky explained.

"With lower ticket prices, more people will be able to watch the games live."

He has a point there. Gate attendance has been very good ever since the cost of general admission tickets were drastically cut down last year.

One other matter that Ricky would like to look into is the PBA's constitution and by-laws.

"I want to review the league's by-laws to see if they are still applicable. I know that some of them need to be scrapped, changed or modified to fit the present scenario," he said.

* * *

Frankly, I was surprised to hear the third point in Ricky's program: officiating, would you believe? An area where angels fear to tread.

"I want to improve officiating!" Ricky declared, sounding very positive.

"Officiating has been very divisive. It has caused much dissension among the teams. It serves to divide, rather than unite."

Of course, he was referring only to bad officiating.

* * *

Ricky admits that his fourth point is not actually a plan but a dream, which many others before him had also nurtured.

"It is a most ambitious dream which surely cannot be realized in my one-year tenure. But perhaps I can plant the seed."

Like others before him, Ricky dreams of building the PBA's own coliseum.

His vision is for a total business complex with store and food and beverage concessions.

Just to show how serious he is about turning this dream into reality, Ricky has relayed his vision to PLDT big boss Manny V. Pangilinan.

"MVP was very open to the idea. He said that perhaps Smart could help us with the project.

But first, I'll have to confer with my fellow PBA governor Buddy Encarnado, who's in the real estate business. We could go on a joint venture."

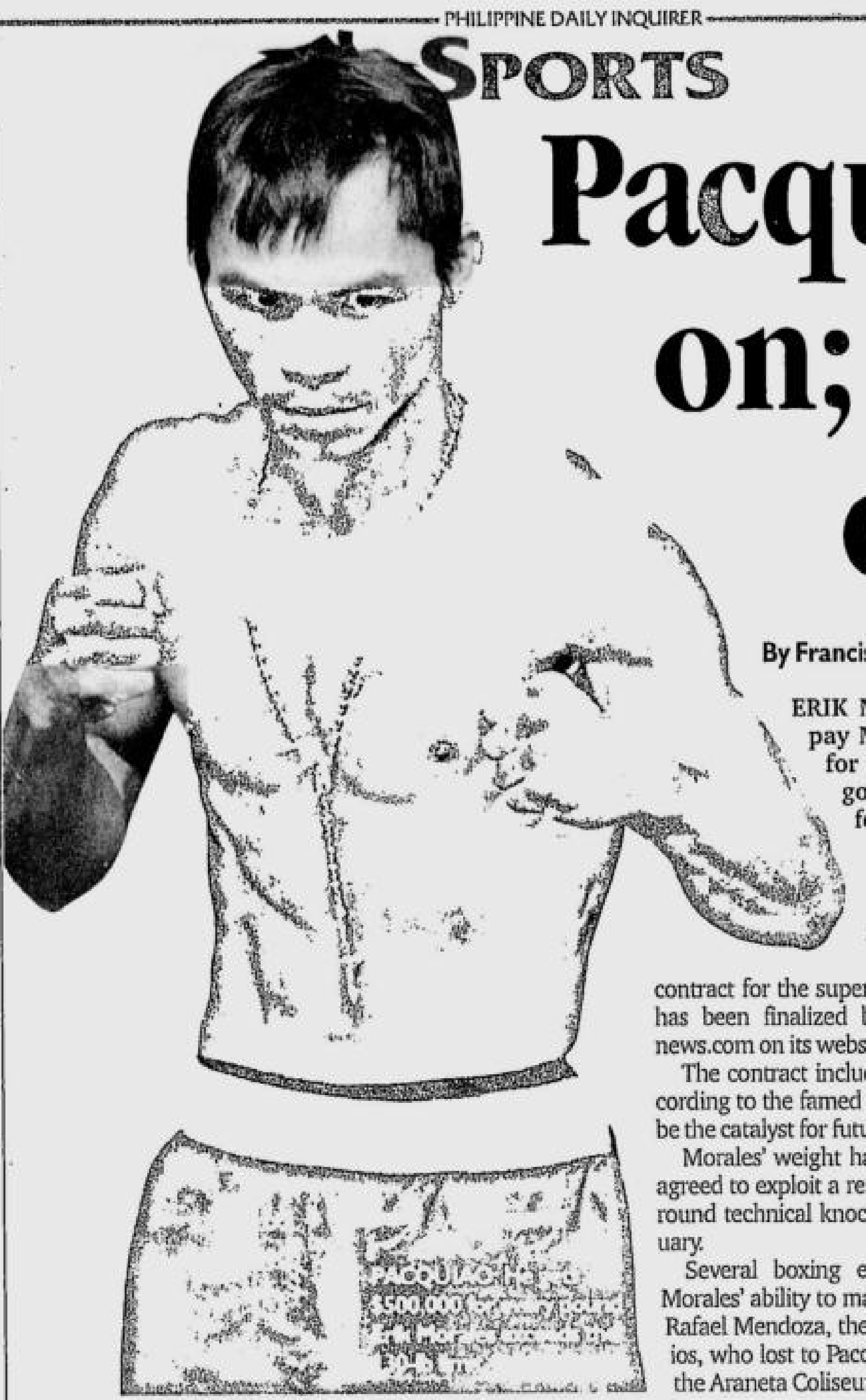
* * *

The PBA Coliseum is only part of Ricky's vision.

He has a more immediate one.

"It's a 20-20 vision," he said.

"A 20 percent increase in revenues from gate receipts and other incomes, and another 20 percent increase in television ratings."



Pacquiao-Morales on; stiff fines for excess weight

By Francis Ochoa

ERIK MORALES WILL HAVE TO pay Manny Pacquiao $500,000 for every pound the Mexican goes over the 130-lb super featherweight limit for their third encounter on Nov. 18.

And this goes for the Filipino fight icon, too.

This is the major clause in the contract for the super fight, set in Las Vegas, which has been finalized based on a report by Fightnews.com on its website yesterday.

The contract includes landmark clauses that, according to the famed boxing website, "will no doubt be the catalyst for future mega-fight contracts."

Morales' weight has been an issue ever since he agreed to exploit a rematch clause following a 10th-round technical knockout loss to Pacquiao last January.

Several boxing experts have cast doubts on Morales' ability to make the weight, the latest being Rafael Mendoza, the adviser of Mexican Oscar Larios, who lost to Pacquiao in a fight held recently at the Araneta Coliseum.

Mendoza pitched Larios as an alternative to Morales, saying that the Mexican ring icon will never make the grade.

"He will die if he fights Pacquiao at 130," said Mendoza. "He will have to cut both legs off."

A key stipulation in the contract is that if Morales exceeds 132 lb, Pacquiao has the option to either accept or decline the fight.

But Pacquiao has raised eyebrows by saying he will not back off from a fight against an overweight Morales. "I will fight him even if he comes in as a heavyweight," Pacquiao was quoted as saying.

Pacquiao, though, may be putting himself at risk if he decides to fight Morales. And he does not have to look far ahead in the weight divisions for an example.

In the second of what was supposed to be three bouts between top lightweights Diego Corrales and Jose Luis Castillo, the latter failed to make the weight but Corrales still fought to cash his paycheck.

Corrales ended up getting knocked out by the heavier Castillo. In their third match last June, when Castillo failed to make the weight anew, Corrales wisely ditched the fight.

Shelley Finkel, Pacquiao's manager who wove the stipulation for excess weight into the contract, said he just wanted to protect his ward and cited the Castillo-Corrales case as his example.

STI conquers New Era; Hawks fall again

By Marc Anthony Reyes

MIKE CABANGON AND RAMON MABAYO TEAMED up in decisive stretches as STI crushed New Era, 80-60, yesterday in the National Athletics Association of Schools, Colleges and Universities (Naascu) basketball tournament at the University of Manila gym.

Cabangon banged in 13 points while Mabayo had 12 for the Olympians, who notched their second victory in three outings while handing the Hunters their first defeat in three games.

Joseph Perlas topscored for the Hunters with 12 points while Renz Tengco and Jeff de Guzman added 11 and 10 points, respectively, but they failed to get enough help from the rest of the team.

In games over the weekend, San Sebastian-Cavite became the third team to conquer five-time defending champion University of Manila with a 76-67 victory.

Glen Bolocon scattered 30 points while Jerome Cenita added 21 for the Babycats, who are taking the league by storm in their maiden appearance. They now have two victories in as many games, while the Hawks suffered their third loss.

Pol Santiago led the Hawks with 19 points while fellow veterans Onofre Napiza and Christian Gobis added 11 and 10 for UM, whose league record 82 straight wins since 2000 ended last year.

The scores:

Yesterday's Game

STI 80—Cabangon 13, Mabayo 12, Porto 9, Junatas 8, Belano 7, Micutuan 6, Macalma 6, Perez 6, Rufin 3, Legaspi 2, Lunar 2, Rosales 2, Limpin 2, San Luis 1, Dia 1, Libunao 0.

NEW ERA 60—Perlas 12, Tengco 11, De Guzman 10, Mabigat 6, Naguit 4, Maynes 4, Bongat 4, Alastre 3, Ibay 3, Assalud 2, Lapid 0, Acuna 0.

Quarters: 21-11, 45-23, 62-41, 80-60

Sunday's Game

SSC-R CAVITE 76—Bolocon 30, Cenita 21, Villaver 8, Gracilla 7, Villareal 14, Echavez 3, Panes 2, Maconocido 0, Lucernas 0, Basa 0.

UM 67—Santiago 19, Napiza 11, Gobis 10, Bonus 8, Ocampo 7, Estacio 6, Maliksi 2, Advincula 2, Assuncion 2, Bucalen 0, Facun 0.

Quarters: 20-19, 40-35, 62-48, 76-67

Jao targets 3rd straight Superbikes win

DEFENDING CHAMPION JOLET JAO OF Shell Advance-Kawasaki seeks his third win in a row when the 2006 Shell Advance-San Mig Coffee Superbikes Series resumes this Sunday at the Batangas Racing Circuit.

Jao, currently with 100 points, swept the last two legs and another win would firm up his hold on solo leadership in this event sanctioned by the National Motorcycle Safety and Sport Association (Namssa).

"Hopefully, the team's preparation will work out fine," said Jao, who's also eyeing his 10th straight superbikes crown. "The only problem I see is if the bike set-up falters on race day."

Expected to press Jao will be Benjo Mendoza of Speedeffex, who gave him a scare in Race 3.

Mendoza, second overall with 86 points, seized the front from Jao in the fourth lap and led until the final lap. But Jao regained the lead with a crucial maneuver on the last turn to pip Mendoza at the line.

Roderick Chua, fresh off his stint in the Asian Road Race of Nations, is third overall with 82 points while Wacky del Rosario is fourth with 72. The event is sponsored by Pilipinas Shell and supported by San Mig Coffee, Casino Filipino, Yokohama, Denso, Arai and Shoei.

Also aiming for crucial victories are Aries Padiernos and John Defensor in the San Mig Coffee Road Racing Championship.

Padiernos guns for another sweep in the Formula 400 division while Defensor eyes a repeat in the Novice SBK class.

JAO: Going for No. 3

Gabionza shrewdest in Tagaytay, advances to P1M poker finals

GARY GABIONZA DOMINATED the Hold'em Challenge at the Casino Filipino in Tagaytay City Saturday and led the first batch of qualifiers in the 2nd Million-Peso Poker Hold'em Philippine Championship grand final.

Joining Gabionza in the championship draw were Victoria Lopez, Gregory Pratt and Herbert Uy.

The next qualifying tournament in Tagaytay City is on Aug. 19. The grand finals, slated on Dec. 16-17 at the Casino Filipino-Pavilion, stakes a P1 million winner's purse and an expensive champion's bracelet.

Players can gain entry to the grand finals—without going through the qualifying tournaments—by paying a registration fee of P30,000.

Qualifying and satellite tournaments are scattered from the last week of July to the first week of December at different Casino Filipino branches nationwide.

For inquiries, visit www.PhilippinePokerTour.com or call Cindy at the tournament secretariat at 817-9092 or 812-0153.

Timely change of tires keys Millionado's Speedfest romp

STA MARIA, LAGUNA—A LAST-MINUTE change of tires proved to be a crucial decision for Joey Millionado who ruled the 1st Sta. Maria Ultimate Speedfest 4x4 Off-Road Racing Championship at a makeshift track here.

Millionado, a former jetski champion, wound up only fourth in the Open 6-Cyclinder class in last Saturday's action as heavy rains made the track tougher, but returned with tractor tires to top the Best Time Shootout with a time of 3:32.30.

He won the P30,000 top purse in the event hosted by Sta. Maria Mayor Joel E. Cuento.

Devor Andres of Marikina Off-Roaders timed 3:56.74 to place second, worth P15,000. Sherwin Catameo finished in 4:06.77 to claim the P5,000 third prize.

Completing the top five were veteran Noel Bartolome of Landcruiser (4:07.26) and Boyie Doblada of Binangonan Off-Roaders (4:11.63).

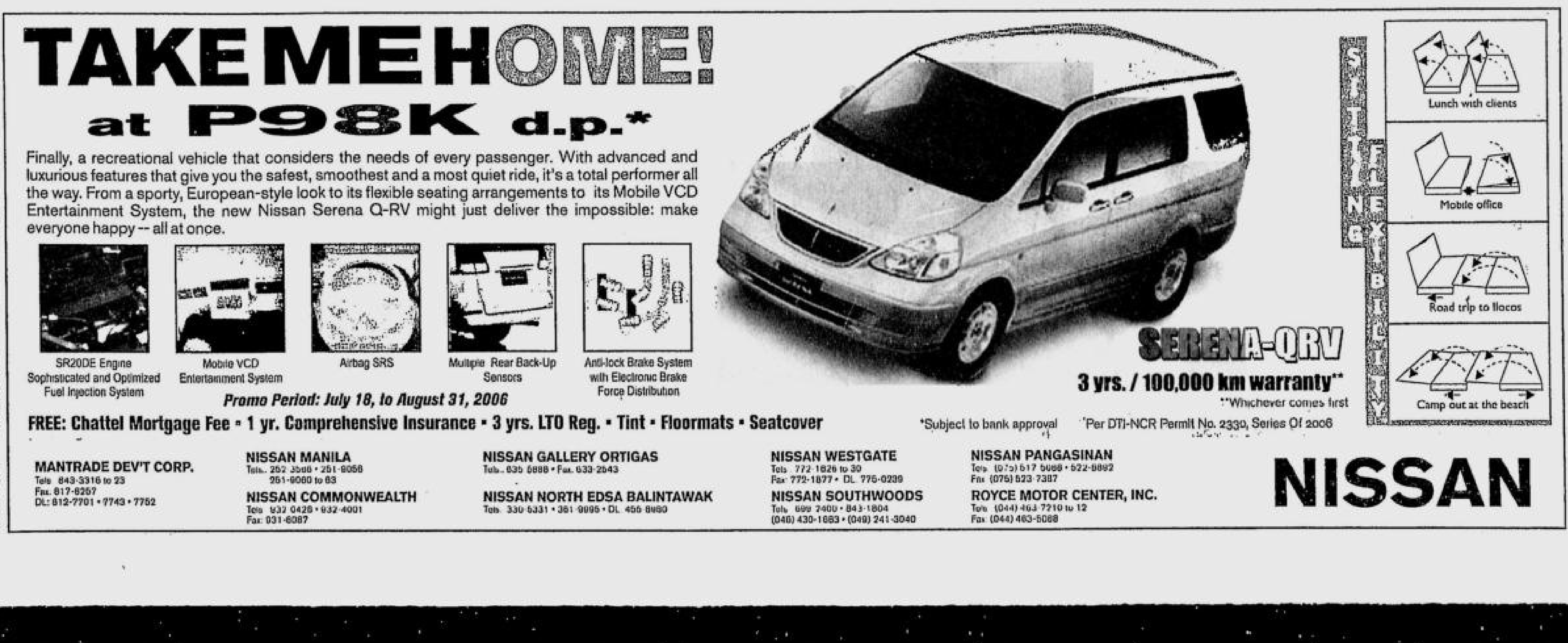
The two-day event organized by Mike Potenciano's MP Turbo and official media partner SPEED TV drew 30 drivers and a jampacked crowd that braved the rains.

Jerry Beech of Caltex Revtex dominated the Motocross Enduro Shootout with a time of 59.52 seconds to pocket the P5,000 top prize. He beat older brother Alvin Beech and Palawan's Nestor Guinto.

Other winners were Omer Dungca, Boyie Doblada and 13-year-old Paul Anthony Dizon.

Dungca, a deaf-mute off-roader from AC4 Team, topped the Production 33 (1:22.61) and the Four-Cylinder (2:54.50) divisions.

Doblada won the Open 6-Cylinders race (2:41.69) while Dizon ruled the Open Novice.



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SPORTS

Landis' sample shows synthetic testosterone

NEW YORK—SOME OF THE TEStosterone found in Tour de France winner Floyd Landis' "A" sample is from an external source and not his body's, The New York Times said Tuesday quoting an unidentified International Cycling Union official.

The carbon isotope test on the first of Landis' two urine samples taken after his 17th stage win in last month's tour contains synthetic testosterone, said the official with knowledge of the results from France's Chatenay-Malabry antidoping laboratory.

The results, if confirmed by Landis' B sample, which the newspaper said the laboratory has agreed to test Thursday through Saturday, could make Landis the first Tour champion to be stripped of his title.

FLOYD LANDIS: I'm not in any doping process. AP

The 30-year-old American, who could also be banned from the Tour for two years, has protested his innocence to the UCI. "I'd like to make it absolutely clear that I'm not in any doping process," he said Friday.

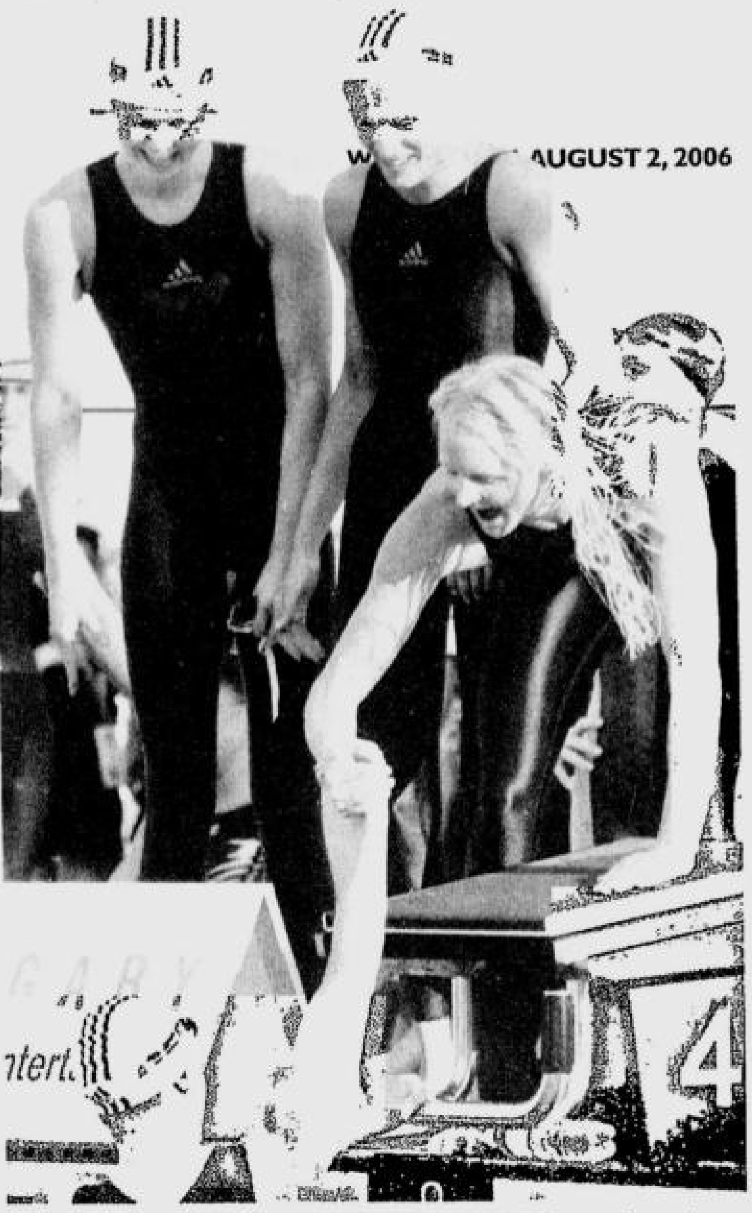
The UCI official told The New York Times that the carbon isotope ratio test differentiates between natural and synthetic testosterone, which after Landis' surprising 17th stage win was found to be more than twice the four-to-one ratio that is allowed.

The newspaper said that Landis' personal doctor Brent Kay acknowledged that his initial test showed a ratio of 11-to-one, but cautioned that it was "not off the chart" and could be due to natural causes, bacterial contamination, alcohol consumption before the test or contamination of the specimen during testing.

Landis Monday moved to accelerate the testing process by asking the Chatenay-Malabry laboratory to go ahead and test the B sample before it shuts for the holidays at the end of the week. Landis has said that he expects the second sample to return a similar result to the first but insists that he is innocent.

The American added that he wished to state "categorically that my Tour win was exclusively due to many years of training and dedication" to his sport.

If Landis was stripped of his title he would be the first ever champion to suffer that fate. *AFP*


THE GERMANS jubilate after setting the 4x100-M freestyle mark. AP

German swimmers sink world record

BUDAPEST—GERMANY SET A world relay record to give the European swimming championships a rousing finish to the opening day of the main pool action Monday.

The Germans broke the women's 4x100 meters freestyle world record set by Australia at the Athens Olympics while Italy bagged its second title of the evening in the concluding men's 4x100 freestyle relay.

Petra Dallmann, Daniela Goetz, Britta Steffen and Annika Liebs clocked three minutes 35.22 seconds to beat the women's relay mark of 3:35.94 set by Australians Alice Mills, Libby Lenton, Petria Thomas and Jodie Henry on Aug. 14, 2004. *Reuters*

Knights hope to regroup, battle Blazers

GAMES TODAY ***(Ninoy Aquino Stadium)***

12 nn—Perpetual Help vs PCU (jrs/srs)
4 p.m.—St. Benilde vs Letran (srs/jrs)

LETRAN HOPES TO REGAIN ITS lost footing when it battles lowly St. Benilde today in the NCAA men's basketball at the Ninoy Aquino Stadium.

In the other seniors match, Philippine Christian University gets back in action against Perpetual Help.

The Knights will take on the Blazers in the 4 p.m. game where they will attempt to get back in orbit after getting kicked out of their axis last Friday with a 57-49 loss to San Beda.

That loss snapped a six-game winning run.

Letran routed St. Benilde the first time around (65-44) even without veteran Aaron Aban, who was then nursing an injured left wrist.

This time, the Knights will miss guard Rafael Jazul who hurt his middle finger against the Lions.

Meanwhile, the NCAA has reported a record-breaking attendance during the San Beda-Letran game at the NAS last Friday, posting a total attendance of 6,059 fans.

The tickets sold like hotcakes to walk-in fans, reported NCAA chair Bernie Atienza. *Marc Anthony Reyes*

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Koronadal upsets rivals in Palaro hosting bid

By Marc Anthony Reyes

KORONADAL CITY, SOUTH COTABATO, scored a knockout against heavy favorites Lanao del Norte and Zamboanga City after it nailed the bidding battle for the hosting of the 2007 Palarong Pambansa.

The Palaro, tentatively set for April 22-28, will be held for the first time in 10 years after the province of Socsargen (South Cotabato, Saranggani and Gen. Santos) combined for the 1996 hosting of the Palaro.

Koronadal's victory was hailed as an upset and what took everybody by surprise was the decision of the Department of Education regional directors who snubbed big-time bidders Tubod and Zamboanga City, which have far superior sports facilities.

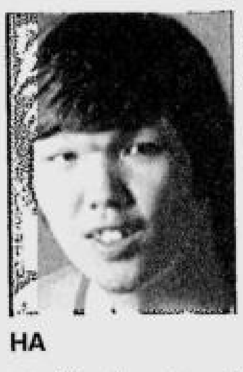
Tubod, which hosted the 2003 edition, boasts the world-class Mindanao Civic Center and was the clear favorite to win the bidding held last July 27.

However, the regional directors, according to Palaro Task Force chief Len Toledo, considered the bold attempt of Koronadal City to handle the Palaro all by itself as a key factor.

Blazers acquire Magloire for Korean, 2 other Bucks

NEW YORK—THE Portland Trail Blazers acquired All-Star center Jamaal Magloire from the Milwaukee Bucks on Monday for Steve Blake, Brian Skinner and Ha Seung-Jin.

MAGLOIRE


HA

Magloire, a 28-year-old Canadian, started all 82 games for the Bucks last season, averaging 9.2 points and a team-leading 9.5 rebounds per game.

"Jamaal is a talented, big body that will give us options in our frontcourt and help us be more competitive against the Western conference's big men," Trail Blazers head coach Nate McMillan said on the team's website.

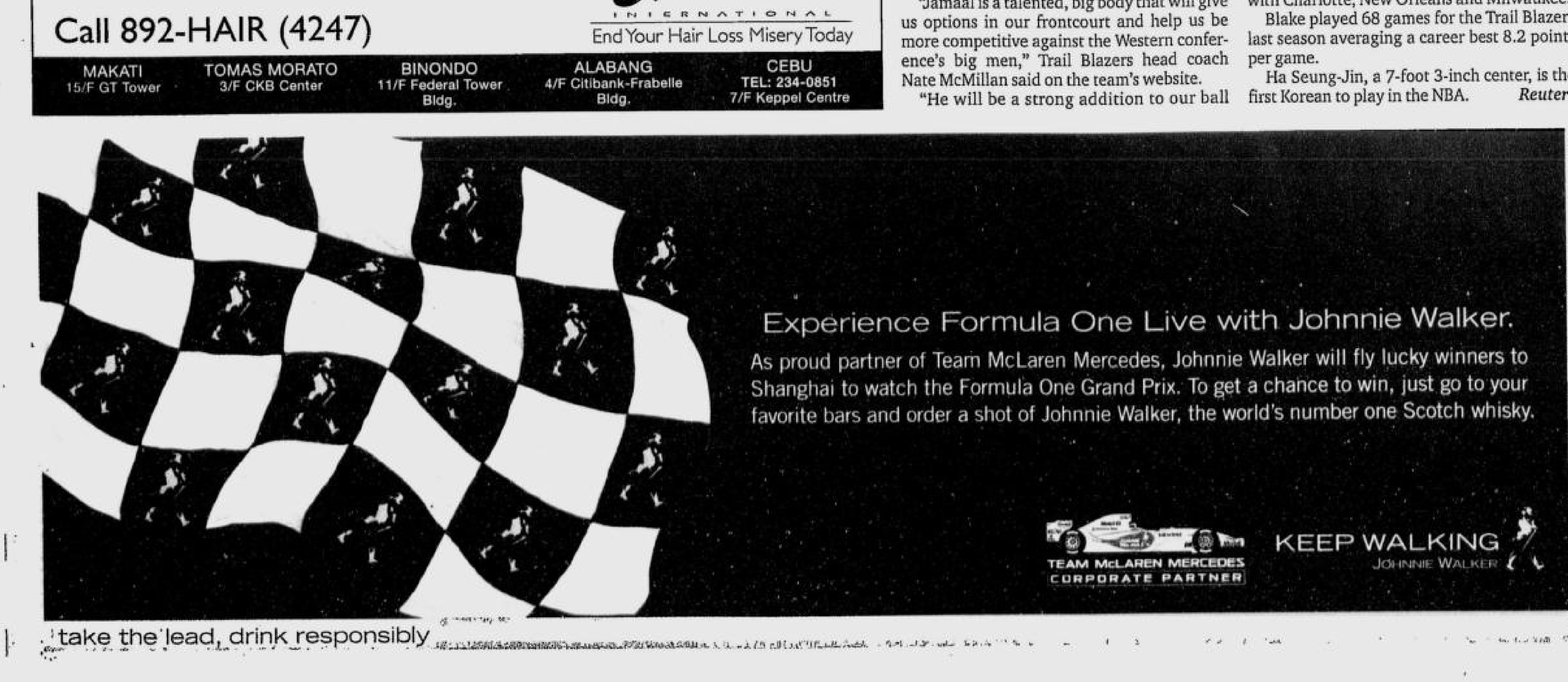
"He will be a strong addition to our ball club and hopefully help us win more games."

The first-round pick of the Charlotte Hornets (19th overall) in the 2000 draft, Magloire has averaged 9.5 and 7.8 rebounds per game with 479 career blocked shots.

An Eastern Conference All-Star in 2004, Magloire has played in all 82 regular season games in three of his six seasons in the league, with Charlotte, New Orleans and Milwaukee.

Blake played 68 games for the Trail Blazers last season averaging a career best 8.2 points per game.

Ha Seung-Jin, a 7-foot 3-inch center, is the first Korean to play in the NBA. *Reuters*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IN THIS ISSUE

- **One less** Yuchengco /B3
- **BAP guards** against price fixing /B10

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Globe profit up 37% to ₱5.8B in 1st half

Income in April-June nearly doubled due to promo blitz

By Riza T. Olchondra

GLOBE TELECOM INC., the country's second-biggest phone company, yesterday said its net profit surged 37 percent to P5.8 billion in the first six months of 2006 from P4.2 billion a year earlier.

That meant Globe generated a net income of P2.3 billion in the second quarter, up 92 percent or nearly double the P1.2 billion a year earlier.

In a disclosure to the Philippine Stock Exchange, Globe senior vice president and chief financial officer Delfin C. Gonzales Jr. said first-half profit rose due to sustained improvements in revenues and effective cost management efforts. Excluding any foreign exchange and mark-to-market gains and losses, net income grew 54 percent year-on-year.

Contributing to the revenue growth were various value-based promos under its "Super Sulit" initiatives, including the industry-leading per-second charging promo for both local and international calls. Globe "Kababayan" also continued to play a major role in the company's revenue growth as OFWs and their families increasingly took up the various value offers under this program.

Globe has also lowered the cost of ownership of its products to make them more accessible to a broader consumer base. Its Touch Mobile Power SIM pack is now being sold at an affordable price of P59, the lowest in the market.

GLOBE/ B2

OFW money fuels housing boom in RP

By Doris C. Dumlao

A BOOMING DEMAND FOR RESIDENTIAL units among overseas Filipinos, supported by a widening pool of affordable housing products, is catapulting Philippine banks' new housing loan portfolios to record highs.

BPI Family Savings Bank, the country's biggest thrift bank, is now generating nearly 60 percent of its new housing loan business from the lucrative overseas Filipino workers market, bank president Alfonso Salcedo Jr. said yesterday at the sidelines of Bank of the Philippine Islands' 155th anniversary celebration.

Four years ago, he said the share was very minimal at 15 percent but the OFW phenomenon had raised the ratio through the years to hit 51 percent of new housing loans as of end-2005.

"We'll cross 60 percent and I think that will settle at 65-70 percent," Salcedo said.

He said OFW-funded housing transactions now accounted for 40 percent of the bank's total housing loan portfolio.

Housing represents about 44 percent of BPI Family Bank's P51 billion loan portfolio while auto lending and the small and medium enterprises portfolio account for about a quarter each.

In the first semester alone, BPI Family's housing loans surged by 36 percent.

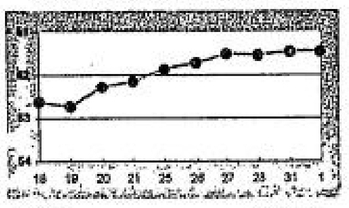
"Because of OFWs, the real estate market will continue to be strong in the next two to three years. What will happen is that ticket items will become smaller because they are now catering to OFWs," Salcedo said.

He said a bigger segment of the OFW market consisted of Filipinos going abroad on a

OFW/ B5

INDICATORS

CURRENCIES



JULY AUGUST

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As of 5 p.m., Aug. 1, 2006

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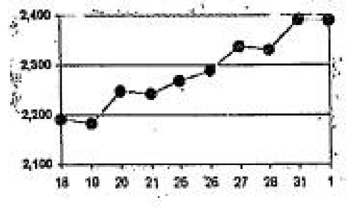
STOCK MARKET

PSE COMPOSITE INDEX



(See stock market report on Page B4)

Shares close lower

SHARE PRICES CLOSED 0.1-percent lower yesterday on late profit-taking after a brief run-up took the index to its best level in almost three months, dealers said.

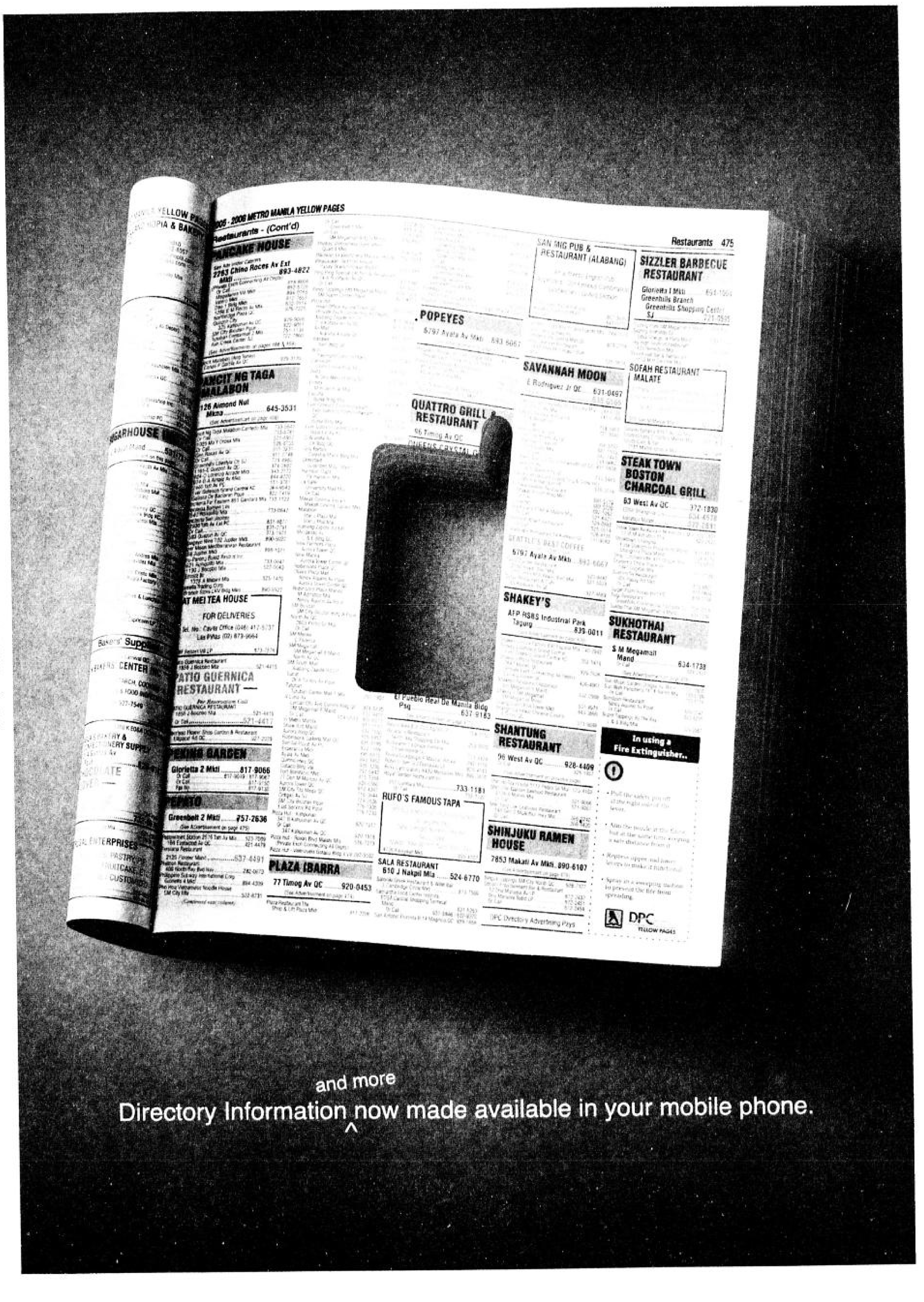
They said most of the interest went to companies that have reported strong second-quarter earnings, or are expected to do so.

The composite index lost 2.51 points to 2,388.33 after trading between 2,383.68 and 2,409.98. Volume was heavy at 2.57 billion shares worth P1.81 billion.

Decliners outnumbered advancers 61 to 26, while 54 stocks were unchanged.

"There was follow-through buying (early on) driven by the strong fundamentals of most blue chips," said Astro del Castillo of First Grade Holdings Inc.

SHARES/ B2



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BIR zeroes in on tax delinquent firms

Revenue agency taps SSS to go after erring companies

By Michelle V. Remo

THE BUREAU OF INTERNAL REVENUE will tap the assistance of pension fund manager Social Security System (SSS) to crack down on firms that do not remit income taxes withheld from their employees.

Revenue Commissioner Jose Mario Buñag told reporters that the revenue agency will use third-party information, which the SSS will provide, to plug tax leaks arising from the delinquency of corporate taxpayers.

According to Buñag, the SSS will also be helpful in providing information that may help enhance tax collection efficiency. Information, such as the number of employees working in a firm, will aid tax collectors in detecting the accuracy of the amounts of withheld income taxes remitted by firms to the BIR.

The government is estimated to lose about P50 billion to P60 billion in tax leaks a year either due to delinquency of taxpayers and inefficiency in tax collection.

The BIR earlier said that failure of some corporate taxpayers to remit the income taxes they withheld from their employees was one of the major sources of tax leaks.

Buñag said he would include the planned tie-up with the SSS in the revenue agency's action plans to meet its tax collection target for this year.

Earlier, the BIR said it would also link up with the Land Registration Authority (LRA), and the Securities and Exchange Commission to gather additional information that can aid it in its tax auditing function.

The BIR was tasked to collect P675.4 billion in taxes this year, 26 percent higher than the P542 billion it collected last year.

Data from the Bureau of the Treasury showed that in the first half of the year, the BIR's tax collection stood at P318.4 billion. This means that the revenue agency will have to collect P357 billion in the second half to meet its full-year target.

Buñag said that the BIR is in the process of securing financial assistance from foreign donors and creditors to help improve its tax collection efficiency.

He said the World Bank would give much as $13 million worth of official development assistance to the BIR. The funds would be used to train personnel and purchase hardware and software needed to improve its taxpayers' database.

BUÑAG

New coaches, trains to beef up LRT fleet

By Riza T. Olchondra

THE LIGHT RAIL TRANSIT AUTHORITY (LRTA) will add 12 new four-car trains, for a total of 48 cars or coaches, to its Line 1 fleet under the second phase of its P214.47-billion capacity expansion program.

The project is funded through a P211-billion (7.420 billion yen) loan from the Japan Bank for International Cooperation and a counterpart funding of P3.467 billion from the Philippine government.

The expansion project also covers the systems upgrading in all stations and trains, construction of additional railways at the LRTA's Pasay depot, the building of passenger walkways at certain terminals, and the establishment of a hi-tech central control center.

LRTA spokesperson Jinky Giorgio told the INQUIRER that the first of the 12 trains from Japan, to be supplied by Sumitomo Itoju, was expected to arrive in September.

The project is aimed at meeting the projected increase in the volume of passengers using LRT Line 1 and the additional demand to be created by the planned integrated line system.

The 48 additional coaches will expand the optimal capacity of the line to 400,000 passengers per peak hour per direction (pphpd) from the current level of 350,000.

Giorgio said the coaches had several new safety features and were more PWD (Passenger with Disability)- friendly.

The train operators will likewise be treated to better ergonomically designed seats to reduce fatigue.

Gov't urged to get its trade act together, create unified office

By Ronnel W. Domingo

A GROUP OF FAIR TRADE ADVOCATES yesterday renewed calls for the creation of a Trade Representative's office, saying this would unify trade negotiation functions currently spread over various agencies.

"Right now, agencies like the departments of foreign affairs, trade and industry, and agriculture, as well as the National Economic and Development Authority, all have negotiating authority and all are involved in talks such as those in the World Trade Organization," said Rene Ofreneo, co-convenor of the Fair Trade Alliance.

"This makes it hard for [advocates] to air grievances and campaign for certain thrusts regarding trade talks. In the present set-up, campaigns are done through protests."

FTA groups nongovernment organizations, manufacturers and other interest groups, like those in the agriculture and fisheries sector.

Ofreneo said the FTA was supporting moves in the House of Representatives for the passage of a law that provides for the creation of the Office of Trade Representative.

He said Representatives Lorenzo R. Tañada III, Ronaldo Zamora and others have already filed a bill regarding the matter.

House Bill No. 4798, which was filed late in 2005, has yet to reach third reading in the chamber.

The bill was filed in the wake of the advocates' failed attempts to compel trade negotiators to disclose the contents of the proposed Japan-Philippines Economic Partnership Agreement, which paves the way for a free trade pact.

Ofreneo explained that with the creation of a Trade Representative's Office, the government would be establishing a single body that would be responsible, accountable and transparent while strengthening the Philippine position in negotiations.

"It's like the American Trade Representative or the European Union's Trade Commissioner—they provide a strong, unified position despite a wide range of interests being represented," he said.

Ofreneo said the need for such an office became more urgent after the collapse of the WTO Doha Development Round when officials of six leading economies failed to come up with an agreement regarding market access and export subsidies.

In a prepared statement, FTA said the WTO talks failed because rich countries "insisted on opening up the markets of developing countries without reducing or phasing out their own subsidies to agricultural exporters, non-tariff barriers to trade and their monopoly of technology."

The group said that the Philippine government needs to correct the "past mistakes of liberalization," and work with other developing countries in pushing for reforms in the global trading system.

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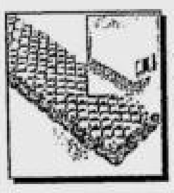

Globe profit up 37% to ₱5.8B in 1st half

From page B1

Its wholly owned subsidiary, Innove Communications Inc., also introduced its Globelines Postpaid Plus landline service for only P795 a month inclusive of perks such as unlimited dial-up Internet and unlimited toll-free local calls to other Globelines users.

Globe also said its board approved a rise in the dividend payout to 75 percent of the previous year's net income from 50 percent.

Analysts expect the net profit of Globe, jointly owned by local conglomerate Ayala Corp. and Singapore Telecommunications Ltd., to rise almost 14 percent this year to P11.74 billion from P10.32 billion in 2005, based on an average forecast by Reuters Estimates.

The forecast was upgraded from an average full-year net profit estimate of P9.86 billion in May.

Globe accounts for about 37 percent of the local mobile phone market, with larger rival Philippine Long Distance Telephone Co. (PLDT) claiming about 58 percent. PLDT is due to announce its first-half performance on Aug. 8.

"Our strong finish to the first half ... is a reflection of increasing competitiveness resulting from the effective execution of key growth initiatives started in the second half of 2005," Globe president Gerardo Ablaza said in a statement.

The company declared a second-half cash dividend of P30 a share, up from P20 in the first half, to stockholders on record as of Aug. 17 and payable on Sept. 12.

Globe said its subscriber base stood at 13.9 million as of end-June, up 5.3 percent from the 13.2 million in March after it offered lower-cost mobile phone SIM packs.

Globe also offered per-second charges for both local and international mobile calls, boosting its first-half net service revenues by 6 percent from a year earlier to P28.5 billion.

Shares close lower

From page B1

He added that fears of another US Federal Reserve rate increase at its meeting next week appeared to have eased for now, enticing investors back into equities.

"The profit reports we've seen so far indicate that external shocks (such as high oil prices) have not really impacted on earnings (in the second quarter)," said Mark Canizares of CitisecOnline.com.

While the mood remains broadly upbeat, some investors decided to take a breather, and moved to cash in gains just ahead of the close pushing the market down slightly. *AFP*

ERRATUM

The BIR Commissioner is **Jose Mario Buñag** not Jose Manuel Buñag as erroneously printed in the BIR Supplement that came out in this newspaper yesterday. Our apologies to Comm. Buñag for this inadvertence.

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INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID
ITB No. III-06-002

PhilHealth Regional Office III (PRO III), through its Bids and Awards Committee (BAC), invites registered and licensed security agencies to apply for eligibility and to bid for the hereunder project:

Name of Project : Procurement of Security and Other Related Services
Location : PhilHealth Bldg., Lazatin Blvd., City of San Fernando
Brief Description : Provision of security and other related services to PhilHealth Regional Office III and its 10 Service Offices in Region III
Approved Budget for the Contract : Php4,882,000.00
Contract Duration : One (1) year
Delivery Period : Within 15 days after issuance of Notice to Proceed

Prospective bidders should have experience in undertaking a similar project within the last two years with an amount of at least 50% of the proposed project for bidding. The Eligibility Check/Screening as well as the Preliminary Examination of bids shall use non-discretionary "pass/fail" criteria. Post-qualification of the lowest calculated bid shall be conducted.

All particulars relative to Eligibility Statement and Screening, Bid Security, Performance Security, Pre-Bid Conference, Evaluation of Bids, Post Qualification, and Award of Contract shall be governed by the pertinent provisions of R.A. 9184 and its Implementing Rules and Regulations (IRR).

The complete schedule of activities is as follows:

Activities	Schedule
1. Issuance of Bid Documents	August 01 to 15, 2006
2. Pre-Bid Conference	August 15, 2006 at 1:30 PM
3. Opening of Bids	August 28, 2006 at 1:30 PM
4. Bid Evaluation	August 29 to September 05, 2006
5. Post-Qualification	September 06 to 13, 2006
6. Notice of Award	September 28, 2006

Bid documents will be available only to prospective bidders upon payment of a non-refundable amount of Php 4,500.00 to the Cashier of PhilHealth Regional Office III.

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(PDI - August 2 & 9, 2006)

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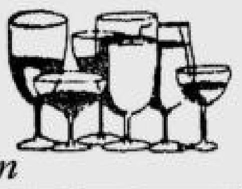

Victor C. Agustin

TAIPAN ALFONSO YUCHENGCO'S NAMESAKE son has left the family-controlled Rizal Commercial Banking Corp., only two months after being reelected to the board and its audit committee.

Alfonso Yuchengco Jr., 53, resigned effective July 31. "His frequent travels abroad for personal and business reasons prevent him from attending the board meetings regularly," RCBC said, expressing regret over his decision to leave.

The bank said it has not yet found a replacement for Yuchengco Jr.

The exit came close on the heels of the resignation last month of his younger sister, Yvonne, from the family's listed holding company, House of Investments.

Despite their departure from the flagship family firms, the two siblings still work for various Yuchengco subsidiaries, either as chair, president, vice chair, director or trustee.

According to the pro-Yuchengco grapevine, the twin resignations would allow the addition of non-family members to the RCBC and HI boards, and thus allow the two listed companies to comply with more stringent banking and corporate regulations on intra-corporate transactions.

With the resignation of the Yuchengco son, only four Yuchengcos—led by the taipan himself and his heir-apparent and eldest child, Helen Y. Dee—remain on the 15-member RCBC board.

Delgados get Sumitomo muscle

THE DELGADOS of Islacom fame have won Sumitomo backing in their plan to use Saipan as a springboard for a Polynesia-wide telecom dream.

The Japanese trading giant has just invested $25 million (about P1.3 billion) to acquire 25 percent of Pacific Telecom Inc., the Saipan-based landline and cellular company of the Delgados.

Formally taken over by the Delgados in September 2005 from Verizon, Pacific Telecom plans to expand later to Guam and Hawaii. It hopes to use the considerable number of Filipino-Americans and, along with Sumitomo, the millions of Japanese tourists on the islands as customer base.

Sumitomo has telecom investments in Mongolia, Indonesia, Russia and Vietnam, and is on the lookout for similar opportunities in other emerging markets.

Money-go-round

- SECURITY Bank has obtained approval from the South Korean government for select Security Bank branches to accept and exchange wons into pesos.
- USAID, which has been channeling grant money to local activists in their campaign to improve corporate transparency and governance, was itself found by another US agency of having engaged in accounting sleight-of-hand in the multibillion-dollar Iraqi reconstruction efforts.

Heard through the grapevine

THE LAW firm Picazo Buyco Tan Fider & Santos and the two top corporate lawyers who had left the firm both wrote to say their parting of ways had been "very friendly," not bitter as alleged in Monday's column.

Still, the Picazo firm was apparently unaware that another associate is set to join the exodus this month, in addition to a colleague who had already followed the two to join the Martin and Mendoza law firm.

(Email: cocktales_pdi@pldtdsl.net or cocktales_pdi@yahoo.com)

Tariff on oil seen to stay at 2% in Aug.

By Abigail L. Ho

AS WORLD OIL PRICES CONTINUE TO ESCALATE, the Department of Energy has recommended that the 2-percent tariff on crude and refined petroleum products last month be maintained for August as well.

Zenaida Monsada, director of the DOE's oil industry management bureau, said maintaining the 2-percent tariff was a more likely scenario than having the tariff slashed further.

"We'll recommend that the tariff be maintained at 2 percent, since we're still far from reaching the next trigger point of $75 a barrel (for Dubai crude)," she said in a telephone interview.

EO 527 provides that the tariff on crude and refined petroleum products will be reduced by a one-percentage-point increments when regional prices hit certain "trigger" amounts.

Under the implementing rules of the EO, the mandated 3-percent tariff will go down to 2 percent if the regional benchmark Dubai crude hits $66 a barrel, and diesel based on the Mean of Platts Singapore (MOPS) benchmark for finished products reaches $88 a barrel.

These price levels should have been sustained for the past two weeks to merit a tariff reduction.

The next trigger points, which will bring the tariff to 1 percent, are $75 a barrel for Dubai crude and still $88 a barrel for MOPS-based diesel.

The import tariff will be scrapped altogether if Dubai crude hits $85 a barrel.

The tariff was brought down to 2 percent in June when world oil prices hit the trigger points, but this went back to the mandated 3 percent in July when prices started to soften.

In mid-July, however, prices again began to skyrocket, on account of the tension between Israel and Lebanon, as well as the uncertainty over how the long-standing debate on Iran's uranium enrichment program will play out.

This prompted the DOE to recommend that the tariff be brought back to 2 percent for the rest of July.

For this month, Monsada said the DOE had made the same recommendation as oil firms were poised to again start raising fuel prices every week.

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METROBANK

Metrobank Plaza, Sen. Gil J. Puyat Ave., Makati City
Tel: No.: 898-8000 Fax No.: 817-6248
Website: www.metrobank.com.ph E-mail: metrobank@metrobank.com.ph

STATEMENT OF CONDITION

(Head Office and Branches)
As of June 30, 2006

ASSETS	
Cash and Cash Items	₱ 4,983,366,823
Due from Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas	23,296,079,789
Due from Other Banks	28,441,711,563
Interbank Loans Receivable	46,780,454,654
Trading Account Securities (Net)	2,569,955,797
Investment in Bonds and Other Debt Instruments (Net)	98,349,086,947
Loans, Discounts and Advances (Net)	213,751,958,093
Equity Investments (Net)	20,559,888,801
Bank Premises, Furniture, Fixtures and Equipment (Net)	8,436,923,306
Other Assets (Net):	55,813,267,668
Property Owned/Acquired	29,214,483,040
Others	26,598,784,628
TOTAL ASSETS	₱ 502,982,693,441
LIABILITIES	
Demand Deposits	₱ 19,422,598,564
Savings Deposits	299,314,033,088
Time Deposits	78,156,704,554
Special/Other Deposits	255,516,027
Due to Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas	109,877,520
Due to Banks	6,666,053
Outstanding Checks/Payment Orders	1,175,384,749
Bills Payable:	8,089,148,054
BSP - Rediscounts/Special Programs	196,566,978
Interbank Borrowings	3,744,227,539
Others	4,148,353,537
Unearned Income and Other Deferred Credits	1,741,474,466
Other Liabilities	24,496,493,882
Unsecured Subordinated Debt (Inclusive of Unamortized Premium/Discount)	17,112,576,258
TOTAL LIABILITIES	449,880,473,215
CAPITAL ACCOUNTS	
Capital Stock	32,673,019,000
Surplus	13,283,733,587
Surplus Reserves	560,503,143
Other Capital Accounts	6,584,964,496
TOTAL CAPITAL ACCOUNTS	53,102,220,226
TOTAL LIABILITIES AND CAPITAL ACCOUNTS	₱ 502,982,693,441
CONTINGENT ACCOUNTS	
Unused Commercial Letters of Credit	₱ 11,225,934,521
Bills for Collection	1,760,398,380
Spot/Future Exchange Bought	23,183,785,107
Spot/Future Exchange Sold	26,365,282,009
Assets Held in Trust Investment Management Agreement	146,997,545,682
Invested In:	
Government Securities	109,663,903,841
Other Securities, Debt Instruments and Shares of Stocks	10,138,999,894
Loans and Discounts	10,263,747,449
Other Assets	16,930,894,498
Accountabilities:	
Trust and Other Fiduciary	77,712,318,761
Common Trust Funds	61,485,147,020
Investment/Fund Management	5,874,915,949
Unearned Income and Other Accountabilities	1,925,163,952
Other Contingent Accounts	9,359,367,852
TOTAL CONTINGENT ACCOUNTS	₱218,892,313,551

*Other Information:

1. Deposits of:			
a) Government			₱ 421,019,865
b) Banks			973,049,960
c) Trust Department			342,952,075
2. Compliance with Magna Carta Law:	Small Enterprises	Medium Enterprises	
Prescribed Ratio of Compliance:	6%	2%	
Actual Compliance:	7.68%	17.91%	
3. Amount of non-performing loans			22,899,349,376
4. Ratio of non-performing loans to total loan portfolio			8.32%
5. Amount of classified loans and other risk assets			55,251,080,915
6. General provision for loan and other losses			2,182,852,053
7. Specific provision for loan and other losses			18,221,534,496
8. Return on Equity (ROE)			11.79%
9. Amount of DOSRI loans/advances			11,163,766,611
10. Ratio of DOSRI loans/advances to total loan portfolio			4.05%
11. Amount of past due DOSRI loans/advances			25,500,000
12. Ratio of past due DOSRI loans/advances to total loan portfolio			0.01%

A. Directors, Officers, Stockholders & Related Interests (DOSRI):

i. Loans, other credit accommodations & guarantees classified as DOSRI accounts under regulations existing prior to the effectivity of BSP Circular No. 423	₱ 8,575,298,436
ii. New DOSRI loans, other credit accommodations & guarantees granted after the effectivity of BSP Circular No. 423	1,922,376,284

B. Non-DOSRI Loans prior to BSP Circular No. 423 dated March 15, 2004:

i. Loans, other credit accommodations and guarantees, as well as availments of previously approved loans and committed credit lines not considered DOSRI accounts prior to the issuance of BSP Circular No 423 but are allowed a transition period as provide provided in said Circular	666,091,891

* Amended to conform with Circular No. 226 dated August 11, 1999 and Memorandum to All Banks dated November 25, 1999

REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES)
CITY OF MAKATI) S.S.

We, Arthur Ty and Joshua E. Naing of the above-mentioned Bank do solemnly swear that all matters set forth in the above Statement of Condition are true and correct to the best of our knowledge and belief.

(Sgd.) JOSHUA E. NAING*
EVP-Controller

(Sgd.) ARTHUR TY
President

SUBSCRIBED AND SWORN to before me this 25th day of July, 2006 at Makati City, affiants exhibiting to me their Community Tax Certificate No. 20527238, issued at Makati City on January 27, 2006 and Community Tax Certificate No. *23871726, issued at Taytay, Rizal on January 28, 2006, respectively.

Doc No: 369
Page No: 75
Book No: I
Series of 2006

(Sgd.) FRANCISCO M. SAMONTE IV
Notary Public
Until December 31, 2007
PTR No. [illegible] Makati City

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

George S.K. Ty
CHAIRMAN, METROBANK GROUP

Antonio S. Abacan, Jr.
CHAIRMAN

Francisco C. Sebastian
Henry M. Sun
VICE CHAIRMEN

Arthur Ty
Angelito M. Villanueva
Renato C. Valencia
Gabriel C. Chua
Valentin A. Araneta
Remedios L. Macalincag
Antonio V. Viray
Vy Tonne So
DIRECTORS

PRINCIPAL OFFICERS

Arthur Ty
PRESIDENT

Edmund A. Go
SENIOR EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT

Melinda C. Ching
Vicente R. Cuna, Jr.
Fabian S. Dee
Joshua E. Naing
Aniceto M. Sobrepeña
Josefina E. Sulit
EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENTS

CONSOLIDATED STATEMENT OF CONDITION

(Bank and its Subsidiaries and Affiliates)
As of June 30, 2006

ASSETS	
Cash and Cash Items	₱ 5,519,555,361
Due from Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas	25,648,043,165
Due from Other Banks	33,883,569,124
Interbank Loans Receivable	49,709,539,706
Trading Account Securities (Net)	16,601,476,969
Investment in Bonds and Other Debt Instruments (Net)	115,304,002,093
Loans, Discounts and Advances (Net)	264,255,319,451
Equity Investments (Net)	8,173,533,066
Bank Premises, Furniture, Fixtures and Equipment (Net)	11,202,036,649
Other Assets (Net):	63,601,711,802
Property Owned/Acquired	32,666,746,924
Others	30,934,964,878
TOTAL ASSETS	₱ 593,898,787,386
LIABILITIES	
Demand Deposits	₱ 21,632,306,863
Savings Deposits	307,859,808,181
Time Deposits	112,987,067,351
Special/Other Deposits	255,516,027
Due to Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas	120,096,262
Due to Banks	6,666,053
Outstanding Checks / Payment Orders	1,488,952,602
Bills Payable:	43,589,433,192
BSP - Rediscounts/Special Programs	196,566,978
Interbank Borrowings	3,744,227,539
Deposit Substitutes	24,822,945,449
Others	14,825,693,226
Unearned Income and Other Deferred Credits	4,895,531,849
Other Liabilities	28,244,832,748
Unsecured Subordinated Debt (Inclusive of Unamortized Premium/Discount)	17,112,576,258
TOTAL LIABILITIES	538,192,787,386
Minority Interest in Allied Undertakings/Subsidiaries/Affiliates	2,603,779,774
CAPITAL ACCOUNTS	
Capital Stock	32,673,019,000
Surplus	13,283,733,587
Surplus Reserves	560,503,143
Other Capital Accounts	6,584,964,496
TOTAL CAPITAL ACCOUNTS	53,102,220,226
TOTAL LIABILITIES AND CAPITAL ACCOUNTS	₱ 593,898,787,386
CONTINGENT ACCOUNTS	
Unused Commercial Letters of Credit	₱ 11,369,855,363
Bills for Collection	1,793,763,616
Spot/Future Exchange Bought	24,766,463,107
Spot/Future Exchange Sold	26,365,282,009
Assets Held in Trust Investment Management Agreement	147,193,486,637
Invested In:	
Government Securities	109,663,903,841
Other Securities, Debt Instruments and Shares of Stocks	10,300,581,054
Loans and Discounts	10,263,747,449
Other Assets	16,965,254,293
Accountabilities:	
Trust and Other Fiduciary	77,908,259,716
Common Trust Funds	61,485,147,020
Investment/Fund Management	5,874,915,949
Unearned Income and Other Accountabilities	1,925,163,952
Other Contingent Accounts	9,418,208,896
TOTAL CONTINGENT ACCOUNTS	₱ 220,907,059,628

*Other Information:

1. Deposits of:	
a) Government	₱ 421,019,865
b) Banks	1,003,123,746
c) Trust Department	380,211,509

2. List of Bank's Financial Subsidiaries:

a) First Metro International Investment Co., Ltd. - HK
b) First Metro Investment Corporation
c) Philippine Savings Bank
d) MBTC Venture Capital Corporation
e) Metropolitan Bank (Bahamas) Ltd.
f) Metrobank Card Corporation (formerly Unibancard Corporation)
g) MB Remittance Centre, Ltd.-HK
h) Metro Remittance Center, Inc., NY (formerly Asia Money Link Corp.)
i) Metro Remittance-Italia SpA
j) ORIX Metro Leasing and Finance Corporation
k) Solid Philippines Venture and Capital Corporation
l) MBTC Exchange Service, GmbH, (Austria)
m) Metro Remittance (UK) Ltd.
n) Metro Remittance Singapore PTE Ltd.
o) Metro Remittance Center, S.A.- Spain
p) Philbancor Venture Capital Corporation

REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES)
CITY OF MAKATI) S.S.

We, Arthur Ty and Joshua E. Naing of the above-mentioned Bank do solemnly swear that all matters set forth in the above Statement of Condition are true and correct to the best of our knowledge and belief.

(Sgd.) JOSHUA E. NAING*
EVP-Controller

(Sgd.) ARTHUR TY
President

SUBSCRIBED AND SWORN to before me this 25th day of July, 2006 at Makati City, affiants exhibiting to me their Community Tax Certificate No. 20527238, issued at Makati City on January 27, 2006 and Community Tax Certificate No. *23871726, issued at Taytay, Rizal on January 28, 2006, respectively.

Doc. No. [illegible]
Page No. [illegible]
Book No. I
Series of 2006

(Sgd.) FRANCISCO M. SAMONTE IV
Notary Public
Until December 31, 2007
PTR No. [illegible] Makati City

Member of the Philippine Deposit Insurance Corporation. Deposits insured up to P250,000 per depositor.

"Mysterious" PC Problems?

There are many types of power problems that can potentially damage a standalone PC, modem or telephone or a network configuration involving any of these devices. You need to understand the scope and source of power problems so you can be sure to choose a solution that protects against the wide variety of power disruptions that commonly occur in single or multiple locations.

Power problems occur more frequently than most would guess. According to recent industry studies, they average nearly one per day. If you don't believe your system could be affected so frequently, consider the definition of "problem." Many of us don't think of the "unexplained" annoyances so common to our computerized age - system crashes, keyboard lock ups, or scrambled data, to name a few - as power related. Yet they very well may be. It doesn't take a complete power outage to affect critical equipment and processes. From drive crashes to error messages and unreadable data to perplexing server re-boots, a moment of less than "pure" power can create havoc or, at the very least, those exasperating "unexplained" processing problems.

The good news is that, despite the hazardous environment in which most computers and other sensitive electronics are placed today, there is a wide range of solutions. Around the world, more and more people are selecting UPS devices to help them keep up and running those systems that house increasingly critical stream of information. To find the most appropriate UPS for your system, you must consider a combination of the right technology, the right configuration of that technology, and the right staff or contract maintenance to support the system once it is in place.

Emerson Network Power provides a full range of power protection solutions. Contact Joanna Lim for any product inquiries at 8934177 or 8934178 or email us at marketing@emersonnetwork-ap.com

Subic Freeport seen to remain RP's top investment site in '06

SBMA raised for national gov't ₱2.2 billion in tax revenue

By Ronnel W. Domingo

SUBIC FREEPORT OFFICIALS YESTERDAY said they expected the special economic zone to remain the country's top investment location for the rest of the year given the Subic Metropolitan Authority's aggressive campaign to attract investors, raise revenues and fight smuggling.

SBMA Chair Feliciano G. Salonga said the agency was working on keeping the inflow of investments upbeat considering Subic accounted for the bulk of investment commitments the country got in the first quarter of the year.

Citing data from the National Statistical Coordination Board, Salonga said SBMA posted P51.7 billion in registered investment commitments from January to March.

Salonga said the amount represented about 71 percent of the total approved investments worth P73 billion posted by the country's four investment promotion agencies, including the Philippine Economic Zone Authority, Board of Investments and Clark Development Corp.

South Korean shipbuilder Hanjin Heavy Industries and Construction Co., which is putting up a P51-billion shipyard in Subic, was the biggest investor during the period.

This and some P400 million worth of other projects in Subic collectively accounted for 81 percent of the country's total foreign direct investments registered in the first quarter.

Also, SBMA Administrator Armand C. Arreza said the agency posted P2.2 billion in revenue for the government in the first semester or an increase of 23 percent from year-ago level.

Arreza said the amount included the collections of the Bureau of Internal Revenue amounting to P560 million and the Bureau of Customs, P1.6 billion. These were higher by 20 percent and 24 percent, respectively, from the levels in the first semester last year.

He attributed the increase in revenue collections to the new companies that started their operations in Subic and provided new jobs to thousands from nearby communities.

Also, Arreza said Task Force Subic (TFS), SBMA's anti-smuggling unit, helped boost the agency's performance in the past six months as it "successfully paralyzed and swept smugglers operating in Subic."

"Smugglers, who used the freeport in the past as their jump-off base, have cheated the government billions of pesos by not paying taxes on imported motor vehicles and expensive merchandises they brought into the country," he said.

PLDT installs fiber optic loop in Baguio

BAGUIO CITY—THE COUNTRY'S SUMmer capital has been pushed into President Macapagal-Arroyo's cyber corridor after a major telecommunications player launched the first digital fiber optic network (Dfon) here.

Eric Alberto, PLDT vice president for corporate business group, said companies had signified their expansion plans while other IT-related firms were planning to locate here with the launching of the Baguio loop of the Dfon.

He said the P35-million project was a "big gamble" on PLDT's part due to Baguio's topographic problems.

After continuous rains, the network in Baguio falters because of landslides and other problems, Alberto explained. This, he added, meant higher maintenance costs.

Before the Dfon, Baguio was relying on microwave facilities.

George Lim, head of PLDT network service group, said the Baguio loop was a dedicated Dfon because there was no other area from San Fernando City in La Union to Baguio that was connected to the circuit, unlike in other PLDT stations in the lowlands.

But he said PLDT believed that the Baguio network was worth the investment it made because of the prospective infusion of additional capital in information technology-based businesses in the area.

Alberto said Clientlogic, one of the biggest call centers here, was planning to double capacity with the Dfon.

PLDT's call center group, ePLDT Ventus Inc., is also planning to build a center here. Texas Instruments Philippines started its expansion last year, in anticipation of the improvement of the telecommunication system here, he said.

The fiber optic link for Baguio has a 10-gigabit-per-second transmission bandwidth, which is equivalent to more than 120,000 simultaneous voice calls.

Lim said PLDT made it a point to have two separate fiber optic cables (one passing through Naguilian Road and the other through Marcos Highway) to avoid service disruption even during the rainy season. *Frank Cimatu, PDI Northern Luzon Bureau*

AEV's 6-month earnings down

By Elizabeth L. Sanchez

HOLDING FIRM ABOITIZ Equity Ventures yesterday said its net earnings dipped 6 percent to P1.56 billion in the first six months compared with P1.66 billion in the same period last year due to lower profits from its banking, food and transport businesses, the company said in a disclosure yesterday.

AEV also said its earnings before deducting interest, taxes, depreciation and amortization (Ebitda) slipped 8 percent to P3.13 billion in the first semester year-on-year.

In the second quarter ending June 30, AEV's net income fell 13 percent to P906 million from P1.04 billion in the same quarter last year.

AEV said its power generation and distribution companies posted better earnings. Its other business groups—banking, food and transport—showed lower profits against year-ago levels.

Power distribution and generation operations contributed P965 million in the first semester, up 10.7 percent from the level in the same period last year.

The power distribution group, alone, posted P628 million in earnings, up 24 percent in the first semester.

Despite slower growth in volume, this sector registered significant earnings growth due mainly to better operating efficiency.

Power generation's earnings contribution amounted to P337 million, a decline of 8 percent from last year's level, due largely to results from Luzon Hydro Corp.

All other AEV generation companies posted better earnings over last year.

In the meantime, its flour and feeds businesses registered lower profits due to higher raw material costs, as well as the softening of demand.

The transport group posted a net loss of P1.1 million in the first six months, a reversal of the P214 million net income recorded in the same period last year. The higher than projected cost of fuel in the current year has more than offset the positive results achieved in its operations.

Also, unfavorable market conditions dragged results of ATS' international charter business unit Jebsen Management (BVI) Ltd.

In spite of the lackluster results in the first half, ATS was able to reduce its bank debt by P400 million during the period.

UnionBank HI net hits ₱1.1B

By Doris C. Dumlao

THE ABOITIZ GROUP'S UNION BANK OF the Philippines posted a first-half net profit of P1.1 billion, which was 26.7 percent lower than year-ago's P1.5 billion.

In a statement issued yesterday, the bank said the decline in profit was partly due to weaker margins brought about by the softening of domestic interest rates.

The expenses incurred in relation to UnionBank's recent acquisition of International Exchange Bank were also blamed for the decline in profit in the first semester.

Net interest income dipped to P1.29 billion in the first half from P1.67 billion a year ago.

For the second quarter, alone, the bank reported a net income of P253.88 million or lower than the P708.31 million last year, with net interest income amounting to P770.44 million as against year-ago's P799.89 million.

The bank said it had set aside P140 million for its loan loss reserves during the first half, bringing its nonperforming loan cover to 83 percent, which was higher than the industry average of 78 percent.

Despite the decline in profits, efficiency and profitability ratios remained well above industry averages, with a return on average equity at 12 percent and a return on average assets at 2 percent during the first half.

Total resources expanded to P108 billion as of June this year from P105 billion in the same period last year.

"The bank's aggressive marketing strategy paid off with low-cost deposits rising by about P1 billion during the reference period," the bank said.

Capital base expanded to P17.6 billion, bringing the bank's capital-to-risk assets ratio to 36 percent.

On June 5, 2006, UnionBank bought 98.88 percent of iBank through a special block sale coursed through the Philippines Stock Exchange.

UnionBank said its merger with iBank would create the industry's ninth biggest bank and seventh largest private universal bank with assets of around P170 billion and deposit base of about P100 billion.

The combined branch network of 191 is expected to place sixth in the industry.

New Philam Plans president named

FORMER AMERICAN INTERNATIONAL Group Inc. vice president for strategic operations Jack Howell was recently named president and chief executive officer of Philam Plans.

Howell replaced former Philam Plans president Jesus Hofileña, who remained Philamlife executive vice president for sales and marketing.

In a press conference yesterday, Howell, who left AIG Hong Kong to assume his new post in the Philippines, said he was expecting the local pre-need industry to recover soon.

"I've looked at what's going on in the preneed industry and it's unfortunate. However, the sector in my mind is in a recovery mode. It's been hit pretty hard in the last two years. Now is the chance for us to step up, fulfill our liabilities and continue to fulfill the needs of our plan holders," Howell said.

Howell added that he was set to introduce new features on existing pre-need education, life and pension products. *Elizabeth L. Sanchez*

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Demand for digital TV content seen to grow

By Riza T. Olchondra

DEMAND FOR DIGITAL TV CONtent is expected to surge, and whoever can best provide Internet Protocol Television (IPTV) will dominate the market, according to router specialist Juniper Networks Ltd.

Peter Lam, the marketing manager of Juniper Networks based in Hong Kong, said on Monday that IPTV would blur the business lines between telecommunications firms, cable operators, Internet service providers and content providers. On the plus side, IPTV would provide new revenue streams never before explored by these entities.

IPTV refers to a system where TV content, such as shows and newscasts, are delivered in digital format to subscribers through a broadband connection. The service is often bundled with VOD or video on demand, and may also include Internet services such as web access and voice over Internet protocol or VoIP.

Apart from giving consumers the power to enjoy smooth and fast delivery of TV shows, IPTV allows viewers to time-shift, or control when they will view the content they want.

Consumers may also become broadcasters, Lam said during a briefing held at the Mandarin Hotel in Makati City. Much like with blogging and podcasting, even individuals or groups without high-tech broadcasting facilities can set up their own TV shows.

PHILIPPINE STOCK EXCHANGE

(As of July 31, 2006)

STOCKS	OPEN	HIGH	LOW	CLOSE	VOLUME
BANKS					
Asiatrust Dev. Bank Inc.	5.9	5.9	5.8	5.8	25,000
Banco de Oro Univ. Bank	33	33	32	32	1,724,400
Bank of the Phil. Islands	54	55	53.5	53.5	1,567,400
China Banking Corp.	870	890	870	885	1,610
Citystate Savings Bank	20.5	20.5	20.5	20.5	400
Export and Ind. Bank A	0.4	0.4	0.4	0.4	6,200,000
Equitable PCI Bank Inc.	85	89.5	85	87	280,000
Metropolitan Bank & Trust	38.5	38.5	37.5	38.5	307,200
Philippine National Bank	35	35	34.5	35	181,700
Rizal Comm. Banking Corp.	18.75	18.75	18.5	18.75	35,700
Security Bank Corp.	49	49	49	49	58,500
Union Bank of the Phil.	45	45	45	45	63,600
OTHER FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS					
Citiseconline.Com Inc.	1.8	1.82	1.8	1.8	483,000
Filipino Fund Inc.	3.95	3.95	3.95	3.95	15,000
Manulife Financial Corp.	1650	1650	1640	1640	90
PCI Leasing & Fin. Inc.	1	1	1	1	77,000
Phil. Stock Exchange Inc.	212	213	212	213	4,930
Sun Life Financial Inc.	1980	1980	1980	1980	130
Ivantage Corp.	1.36	1.38	1.32	1.34	5,887,000
INDUSTRIAL					
ELECTRICITY, ENERGY, POWER & WATER					
First Gen Corp.	44	44	43.5	44	48,800
First Phil Hldgs Corp.	46	46	45	45	1,297,100
Manila Electric Co. A	15.75	15.75	15.75	15.75	167,600
Manila Electric Co. B	24.5	24.75	24.5	24.75	880,900
Manila Water Co. Inc.	8.6	8.6	8.2	8.2	2,633,000
Petron Corp.	4.35	4.45	4.25	4.25	5,758,000
East Asia Power Res. Corp.	0.27	0.28	0.27	0.28	500,000
Trans-Asia Oil and Energy	0.94	0.94	0.94	0.94	50,000
FOOD, BEVERAGE & TOBACCO					
Alaska Milk Corp.	3	3	3	3	62,000
Ginebra San Miguel Inc.	23.5	23.5	23.25	23.25	206,500
Jollibee Foods Corp.	33.5	34.5	33.5	34	315,500
Roxas Holdings Inc.	3.75	3.8	3.7	3.75	1,803,000
San Miguel Corp. A	65.5	65.5	65	65.5	87,800
San Miguel Corp. B	75	75	74.5	75	59,400
Universal Robina Corp.	19	19	18.75	19	457,800
Vitarich Corp.	0.21	0.21	0.21	0.21	300,000
CONSTRUCTION, INFRASTRUCTURE & ALLIED SERVICES					
Southeast Asian Cement	0.31	0.31	0.29	0.29	9,210,000
Engineering Equip. Inc.	1.62	1.64	1.6	1.6	1,921,000
Holcim Philippines Inc.	5.2	5.2	5	5	1,161,000
Republic Cement Corp.	1.36	1.36	1.34	1.34	75,000
CHEMICALS					
Mabuhay Vinyl Corp.	0.73	0.73	0.65	0.65	30,000
DIVERSIFIED INDUSTRIALS					
Global Equities Inc.	0.48	0.54	0.38	0.4	291,270,000
Picop Resources Inc.	0.075	0.075	0.07	0.07	8,300,000
HOLDING FIRMS					
Ayala Corp.	422.5	435	422.5	432.5	136,630
Alsons Cons. Res. Inc.	0.56	0.56	0.56	0.56	750,000
Aboitiz Equity Ventures	5.3	5.3	5.2	5.2	993,000
Ajo.Net Holdings Inc.	0.026	0.027	0.026	0.026	25,300,000
A. Soriano Corp.	1.84	1.84	1.82	1.82	133,000
APC Group Inc.	0.23	0.25	0.23	0.23	5,200,000
Alcorn Gold Res. Corp.	0.0075	0.0075	0.0075	0.0075	4,000,000
Anglo Phil Holdings Corp.	0.97	0.97	0.95	0.95	1,270,000
ATN Holdings Inc.	1.58	1.58	1.56	1.56	80,000
Baguio Gold Holdings Corp.	3.85	3.85	3.2	3.25	1,557,000
Balabac Resources & Hldgs	1.08	1.08	1.02	1.02	250,000
Bacnotan Cons Indus Inc.	10.5	10.75	10.5	10.75	32,000
Benpres Holdings Corp.	1.14	1.14	1.12	1.12	5,557,000
Dmci Holdings Inc.	4.3	4.3	4.25	4.25	725,000
Fil-Estate Corp.	0.26	0.26	0.26	0.26	100,000
Filinvest Dev. Corp.	2.9	2.9	2.9	2.9	11,000
J.G. Summit Holdings Inc.	6.4	6.4	6.2	6.2	133,000
Pacifica	0.012	0.012	0.011	0.011	42,000,000
Prime Orion Phils. Inc.	0.205	0.21	0.185	0.185	4,600,000
Solid Group Inc	0.54	0.54	0.54	0.54	220,000
Sinophil Corp.	0.13	0.14	0.125	0.125	10,750,000
SM Investments Corp.	227	227	224	224	79,680
South China Resources Inc.	0.92	0.92	0.92	0.92	100,000
UniOil Res. & Holdings Co.	0.085	0.09	0.075	0.075	37,900,000
Wellex Industries Inc.	0.12	0.135	0.12	0.125	9,290,000
PROPERTY					
Ayala Land Inc.	14	14.25	13.5	13.75	8,216,800
Belle Corp.	1.08	1.08	1.04	1.04	14,441,000
A Brown Company Inc.	0.9	0.9	0.9	0.9	60,000
Crown Equities Inc.	0.43	0.43	0.35	0.35	58,200,000
Cebu Holdings Inc.	2.14	2.14	2.14	2.14	2,222,000
C & P Homes Inc.	1.44	1.44	1.44	1.44	5,000
Cyber Bay Corp.	0.28	0.29	0.25	0.25	5,620,000
Empire East Land Inc.	0.49	0.49	0.47	0.47	11,910,000
Ever-Gotesco Resources	0.04	0.04	0.038	0.038	4,600,000
Filinvest Land Inc.	1.44	1.46	1.42	1.46	16,081,000
Gotesco Land Inc.	0.075	0.075	0.075	0.075	400,000
Interport Res.	0.007	0.007	0.007	0.007	45,000,000
Interport Res. B	0.0075	0.0075	0.007	0.007	43,000,000
Keppel Phils. Prop. Inc.	0.8	0.8	0.8	0.8	50,000
Kuok Phil. Properties	0.215	0.225	0.215	0.22	530,000
Fil-Estate Land Inc.	0.41	0.41	0.41	0.41	5,520,000
Megaworld Corp.	1.48	1.52	1.48	1.5	62,205,000
Metro Pacific Corp.	0.26	0.27	0.25	0.25	28,680,000
MRC Allied Ind. Inc.	0.27	0.3	0.27	0.3	550,000
Philippine Estates Corp.	0.14	0.14	0.135	0.14	2,530,000
Robinsons Land Corp.	11.5	11.5	11.5	11.5	191,100
Phil Realty and Holdings	0.38	0.41	0.37	0.38	69,520,000
SM Development Corp.	1.58	1.58	1.58	1.58	180,000
SM Prime Holdings Inc.	8.2	8.2	8	8.2	7,468,000
Suntrust Home Dev. Inc.	0.6	0.62	0.59	0.59	140,000
Uniwide Holdings Inc.	0.075	0.08	0.075	0.08	4,000,000
SERVICE					
MEDIA					
ABS-CBN Broadcasting Corp.	16.5	17	16.5	16.5	25,900
Manila Bulletin Pub. Corp.	1.28	1.28	1.24	1.26	54,000
TELECOMMUNICATIONS					
Digital Telecom Phils Inc.	1.32	1.32	1.28	1.32	1,562,000
Globe Telecom Inc.	990	1020	990	1010	59,080
Pilipino Tel. Corp.	3.8	3.85	3.8	3.8	6,391,000
Phil. Long Dis Tel Co.	2070	2090	2055	2090	181,580
INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY					
Boulevard Holdings Inc.	0.185	0.185	0.185	0.185	700,000
Imperial Res.	0.013	0.013	0.013	0.013	3,000,000
Ionics Inc.	1.98	2	1.96	1.96	71,000
ISM Communications Corp.	0.055	0.055	0.0525	0.0525	27,600,000
Philweb Corp.	0.033	0.033	0.032	0.033	331,200,000
TRANSPORTATION SERVICES					
Asian Terminals Inc.	2.8	2.9	2.8	2.9	4,655,000
Int'l Container Term'l Sv	14.25	14.25	14.25	14.25	449,800
Lorenzo Shipping Corp.	1.22	1.22	1.22	1.22	50,000
HOTEL & LEISURE					
Acesite Phils Hotel Corp.	4.85	4.85	4.85	4.85	932,000
Leisure & Resorts Corp.	1.4	1.4	1.4	1.4	370,000
Premiere Ent. Prod. Inc.	0.23	0.23	0.22	0.22	300,000
Waterfront Phils. Inc.	0.51	0.53	0.5	0.5	1,910,000
EDUCATION					
iPeople Inc.	3.05	3.05	3	3	81,000
DIVERSIFIED SERVICES					
Jth Davies Holdings Inc.	16	16	16	16	2,000
Macroasia Corp.	2.46	2.46	2.26	2.28	902,000
Paxys Inc.	11.25	11.25	11	11.25	362,100
MINING					
Apex Mining Co. Inc. A	4.25	4.25	4.15	4.15	1,409,000
Apex Mining Co. Inc. B	4.15	4.3	4.15	4.2	138,000
Abra Mining & Industrial	0.0085	0.0085	0.0085	0.0085	26,000,000
Atlas Cons. Min & Dev't	8	8	7.9	7.9	958,000
Dizon Copper Silver Mines	2	2	2	2	130,000
Lepanto Cons Mng. Co. A	0.29	0.3	0.29	0.29	17,240,000
Lepanto Cons. Mng. Co. B	0.32	0.34	0.32	0.32	5,410,000
Manila Mining Corp. A	0.029	0.029	0.028	0.028	185,400,000
Manila Mining Corp. B	0.032	0.032	0.031	0.031	93,500,000
Omico Corp.	0.0095	0.0095	0.009	0.009	635,000,000
Philex Mining Corp. A	4.1	4.25	4.1	4.15	5,252,000
Philex Mining Corp. B	4.2	4.3	4.2	4.25	7,471,000
Semirara Mining Corp.	27	27	26.5	27	18,300
United Paragon Mining Co.	0.54	0.55	0.48	0.48	4,020,000
Vulcan Ind'l	0.59	0.59	0.58	0.58	500,000
OIL					
Basic Consolidated Inc.	0.26	0.26	0.26	0.26	100,000
Oriental Pet. & Min. A	0.011	0.011	0.011	0.011	302,800,000
Oriental Pet. & Min. B	0.012	0.012	0.012	0.012	20,000,000
The Philodrill Corp. A	1.28	1.28	1.26	1.26	957,000
The Philodrill Corp. B	1.28	1.28	1.28	1.28	412,000
Petroenergy Res. Corp.	16.25	16.5	16.25	16.25	306,200
PREFERRED					
Ayala Corp. Pref. B	101	101	101	101	9,800
PLDT (10% Pref) Series O	10.5	10.5	10.5	10.5	300
PLDT (10% Pref) Series V	10.5	10.5	10.5	10.5	100
PLDT (10% Pref) Series W	10.5	10.5	10.5	10.5	100
WARRANTS, PHIL. DEPOSIT RECEIPTS, ETC.					
ABS-CBN Hldgs. Corp. (Pdr)	16.75	16.75	16.75	16.75	8,100

CURRENCIES

August 1, 2006 Country	Unit	Euro Equivalent	Dollar Equivalent	Peso Equivalent
United States	Dollar	0.782718	1.000000	51.4420
Japan	Yen	0.006829	0.008725	0.4488
United Kingdom	Pound	1.462508	1.868500	96.1194
Hong Kong	Dollar	0.100731	0.128694	6.6203
Switzerland	Franc	0.636201	0.812810	41.8126
Canada	Dollar	0.692426	0.884643	45.5078
Singapore	Dollar	0.495799	0.633433	32.5851
Australia	Dollar	0.599416	0.765814	39.3950
Bahrain	Dinar*	2.076339	2.652731	136.4618
Saudi Arabia	Rial	0.208713	0.266652	13.7171
Brunei	Dollar	0.494234	0.631433	32.4822
Indonesia	Rupiah	0.000086	0.000110	0.0057
Thailand	Baht	0.020690	0.026434	1.3598
UAE	Dirham	0.213112	0.272272	14.0062
Euro	Euro	1.000000	1.277600	65.7223
Argentina	Peso	0.254750	0.325468	16.7427
Brazil	Real	0.360069	0.460024	23.6646
Denmark	Kroner	0.134062	0.171277	8.8108
India	Rupee	0.016836	0.021510	1.1065
Malaysia	Ringgit	0.214091	0.273523	14.0706
Mexico	New Peso	0.071416	0.091241	4.6936
New Zealand	Dollar	0.482712	0.616713	31.7250
Norway	Kroner	0.127236	0.162557	8.3623
Pakistan	Rupee	0.012993	0.016600	0.8539
South Africa	Rand	0.113060	0.144446	7.4306
Korea	Won	0.000820	0.001047	0.0539
Sweden	Kroner	0.108672	0.138839	7.1422
Syria	Pound	0.015078	0.019264	0.9910
Taiwan	Nt Dollar	0.023905	0.030541	1.5711
Venezuela	Bolivar	0.000365	0.000466	0.0240

Standards for biofuels pushed

DOE calls on Asean to harmonize quality standards to ease trade

By Abigail L. Ho

THE DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY has called on energy ministers from the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (Asean) to consider establishing harmonized product and quality standards for biofuels as well as refueling stations and conversion facilities.

During the recent 24th Asean Ministers Energy Meeting in Vientiane, Laos, Energy Secretary Raphael Lotilla said common product and quality standards for biofuels and blends could provide flexibility among the region's member-nations.

This meant that in the event of a local supply shortage, Asean countries could easily trade their products within the region, he said.

Common standards for refueling stations and conversion facilities, on the other hand, would eliminate "technical barriers" and make biofuels safer and more affordable, he added.

In the same vein, he proposed that a regional and bilateral cooperation be forged to facilitate in-region manufacturing of renewable energy and alternative fuel technologies.

"Asean will do well to find its own niche in technology markets and applications most relevant to our own resource endowments," he said.

Since these technologies were still evolving, he said Asean member-nations should start developing their own technology expertise and manufacturing capacity to support widespread renewable energy and biofuels production.

"We are now facing a common and inevitable problem of soaring energy prices, which further expose our economies to great risks," he said, "Therefore, close collaboration within Asean and between our governments and the private sector in implementing regional cooperation programs in different fields must be strengthened to achieve energy security and independence."

The Asean energy ministers all agreed that closer regional cooperation and collaboration should be put in place to cushion the effects of skyrocketing world oil prices.

Bulacan municipality has no tax obligations

By Michelle V. Remo

THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT OF Plaridel, Bulacan maintains that it does not owe the Bureau of Internal Revenue some P9.7 million in back taxes, stressing that the enhancement of tax collection and prompt remittance of taxes have been one of the municipality's strongest reform programs.

Mayor Anastacia Vistan said the local government was in fact able to secure a certification from the BIR last month attesting that it had no delinquent account liabilities with the BIR.

"We are updated in our tax obligation," Vistan told the INQUIRER. "That is one of the things our local government is proud of."

Vistan said that when she assumed office in 2004, she immediately set out to settle the local government's various financial obligations and worked to wipe out the municipality's budget deficit.

She said that, from having close to P15 million in deficit in 2004, the local government made a turnaround and recorded a P10-million surplus in 2005. This was made possible through an intensified tax collection campaign, which included door-to-door collection of taxes and the offer of amnesty for delinquents.

The Department of Finance earlier said that it has asked the BIR, its attached agency, to go after tax-delinquent local government units as one of the ways to shore up the national government's collection effort and address its lingering budget woes.

The back taxes include withholding income taxes from suppliers and employees that have remained unremitted since the 1990s.

Data from the Bureau of Local Government Finance earlier showed that Plaridel had P9.7 million in back taxes.

But the certification which the local government of Plaridel obtained from the BIR indicated that the municipality had no unsettled liabilities with the tax bureau.

Vistan said the amount of unsettled tax obligations most likely reflected the liabilities of the BIR's revenue district offices (RDOs), some of which have failed to remit taxes to the national office of the revenue agency.

She said the local government of Plaridel was supportive of the national government's focus on tax compliance, as contained in the fiscal reform agenda.

OFW money . . .

From page B1

three- to five-year contract basis.

"These are the people who are not very rich. They are buying house and lot units worth about P600,000 to P1.75 million. That's the big segment and that's growing very fast and bringing down the ticket sizes of the developers," Salcedo said.

He said property developers like affiliate Ayala Land Inc.'s Avida were putting up good quality but low-cost dwelling units worth P500,000 to P1 million across the country.

The other segment of the OFW market consists of those buying higher end property units worth P8 million and up, mostly Filipinos who have migrated to the United States or Europe for decades but were looking forward to their retirement or a place to stay whenever they visit the country, Salcedo said.

He noted that majority of buyers of the plush condominium unit Grand Shang in Makati were Fil-Ams buying these residential units for their own use.

"Those buying for investment is a smaller part of the market. Most buyers come here every year or twice a year and they don't want to hassle their relatives or stay in a hotel," Salcedo said.

For its part, BPI Family is generating its share of the housing loan business through tie-ups with real estate developers.

A recent research report from Deutsche Bank said subsidies from abroad were indeed emerging as an important factor behind the boom in the Philippine property market. The report estimated that some 30 percent of all transactions of listed property developers, possibly as high as 50 percent if indirect contributions were counted, emanated from higher earning overseas-based Filipinos.

The passage of a law in 2004 allowing Filipinos to hold dual citizenships was also cited to have enlarged the market for overseas-based homebuyers. Prior to the permission of dual citizenship, Filipinos living abroad who carried other passports were barred from owning land.

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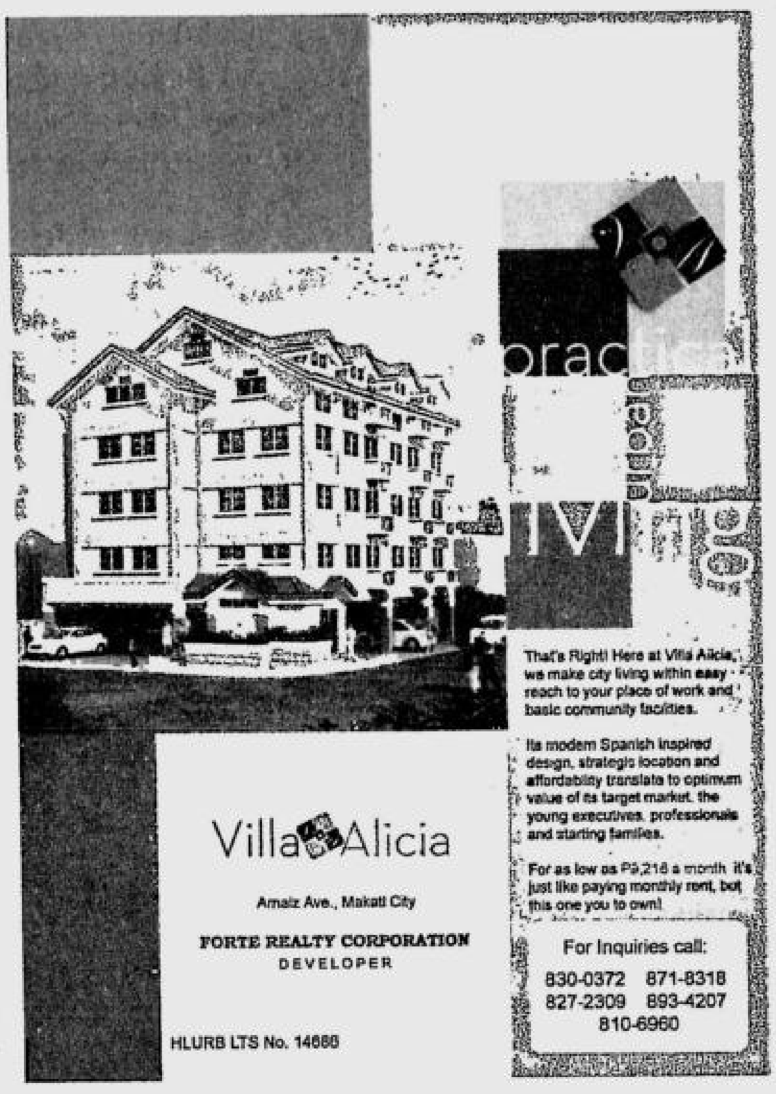

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Beatriz De Castro Ejercito

Peacefully joined her Creator on Sunday, July 31, 2006

She shall be truly missed by her loving children:
Loida and Agapito(+) Paomboy, Dely and Tito(+) de Guzman
Lita and Reny(+) de la Peña, Toti and Auring de Guzman
Romy and Tess, Carlos (Dô) and Linda
Carmen(+) and Jimmy Lapan(+), Celia and Elmer Tapawan
Fe Jakic, Julie, Gabriel Jr., Manuel(+), Dorotea and Mila

Grandchildren, Great Grandchildren, and Great, Great Grandchildren

Wake Schedule:
August 1 - 2, 2006 Chapels 7 - 9 of the
Mortuary & Crematory at The Heritage Park

August 3 - 4, 2006
Ejercito Residence at 394 Garcia St., Cavite City

Nightly Mass: 7:00pm

Necrological Mass:
August 5, 2006 1:00 pm at Iglesia Filipina, Caridad, Cavite City

Interment will be on Saturday, August 5, 2006
at 1:00pm at Himlayan Caviteño,
Cavite City after the Necrological Mass

Mortuary and Crematory at The Heritage Park

DR. MA. NORILYN SANCHEZ TUPAZ

of Pateros, Metro Manila and Los Angeles, California

Peacefully joined our Lord on July 29, 2006
at the age of 42.

Her bereaved family; husband: **Gilbert**; children: **Nathan & Gerald**; parents: **Bert & Pat**; brothers: **Jojo, Jerry, Edward, Edwin, Ronald, Norman & sister Michelle;** in-laws, uncles, aunts, nephews, nieces, relatives and friends request the pious readers to pray for the eternal repose of her soul.

Her remains may be viewed on Tuesday, August 1, 2006 at Forest Lawn Memorial, Glendale, California, from 10:00 a.m. - 9:00 p.m. and Thursday, August 3, 2006 from 10:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m. Holy Mass will be offered from 6:00 p.m.- 9:00 p.m. at the Forest Lawn Chapel, Glendale, California.

On Friday, August 4, 2006, her remains will be transferred to St. Brendan Catholic Church, corner 3rd and Wilton St., Los Angeles, California, where the Funeral Mass and last rites will be held at 1:00 p.m.

Interment will follow immediately after the Mass at Forest Lawn Memorial Park, Glendale, California.

Our Dearly Beloved

FELIPE YU HAN YAT

Passed away on July 29, 2006
at the age of 89.

We, the bereaved family, request all relatives and friends to join us in prayers for his repose in heaven.

His remains lie in state at the Sanctuario de San Jose, Greenhills East.

Interment will be on Saturday, 5 August 2006 at the Heritage Memorial Park, Fort Bonifacio, Taguig, Metro Manila.

Our Dearly Beloved

JULIO GARCIA SACRAMENTO

Has peacefully joined our Lord
on July 31, 2006 at age of 85.

His loving wife, **LEUTERIA**; children **CARMELITA, RODOLFO, ROBERTO, ESTRELLA, ROLANDO, JESUS, ANGELITO** and **NELSON**; grandchildren and all relatives and friends request the pious readers to pray for the eternal repose of his soul.

His body lies in state at Enriquez Funeral Parlor, Concepcion, Tarlac.

Interment will be on August 3, 2006 at 10:00 am at Concepcion Memorial Shrine, Concepcion Tarlac.

Natividad Dolendo Zaragoza

now rests in the infinite Grace and Goodness of the Lord
on July 31, 2006 at the age of 85.

Her sisters: **Nena** and **Noemi**; children: **Boy**, **Ludy** and **Ding**; grandchildren: **Peppy** and **Dino**, **Ina** and **Arvie**, **Karrots** and **Bryan**, and **J. Paul**; great-grandchildren: **Marco**, **Nicky**, **Javy**, **Nacho**, **Joshua**, **Santino** and **Luca** request for you to pray for her eternal happiness in heaven.

Her body lies in state at the Capilla dela Virgen, Santuario de San Antonio Parish, Forbes Park.

Interment will be on Thursday, August 3, 2006 at the Loyola Memorial Park, Parañaque after the 7:30 a.m. Mass at the Capilla dela Virgen.

Message of Thanks

We, the family, **Ernesto**(†), **Elwin**(†) & **Conchita**,
Emmanuel & **Irene**, **Efren** & **Remia**, **Estrella**, **Ramon** & **Ursula**;
grandchildren, and great grandchildren of the late

Leonila L. Regio

who peacefully joined our Lord on July 17, 2006

wish to express our deepest gratitude and sincere appreciation
to all who offered Masses and prayers, sent flowers and messages
of sympathy & who in countless ways condoled with
and comforted us in our days of bereavement

I have
fought
the good
fight,
I have
finished
the race,
I have
kept the
faith

(2 Timothy 4)

Let us thank God for the moments
of warmth & joy that we all shared
in the presence of a loving mother.

ESTER R. ARBOLEDA

of Guinobatan, Albay

Joined our Creator on August 1, 2006 at the age of 92.

Her bereaved husband **Andres Sr.**; children **Armenio** (†), **Roming** (†), **Joe** (†) & **Herminia**, **Cecilio** & **Dalinds**, **Heidi**, **Rev. Fr. Andres Jr.** (†), **Elsa** (†), **Nilda** & **Benedicto**, **Justino** & **Julie**, **Socorro** (†), **Nestor**, **Romeo** (†) & **Evelyn**, and **Manuel** & **Yolanda**; grandchildren and great grandchildren, request relatives and friends to join them in prayers for the eternal repose of her soul.

Her remains lie in state at Immaculate Concepcion Parish, Guinobatan, Albay.

Interment will be on August 5, 2006, Saturday at the Guinobatan Cemetery after the 1:00 p.m. Mass at the Immaculate Concepcion Parish, Guinobatan, Albay.

NICANOR "NONOY" J. MANSILLA

Peacefully joined his Creator on July 29, 2006 at the age of 91.

His loving wife **Edeng**; children **Erlinda**, **Florante**, **Angelina** and **Rolando**; grandchildren and all relatives & friends request the pious readers to pray for his eternal repose.

His remains lie in state at 194 Mauban St., Caloocan City.

Interment will be on August 5, 2006 at La Loma Cemetery at 2:00 p.m.

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DOMINADOR P. SORIENTE

...passed away in the Grace of Our Lord on
August 1, 2006 at the age of 72.

His loving wife **Fresca**, sons **Lorenzo** (†), **Victor** (†), daughters **Cita** (†) and **Myrna**, sons-in-law **Ding** and **Bodi**; grandchildren **Ian**, **Nonong**, **Bea**, **Nikki** and **Trixie**; other relatives and friends request the readers to join them in praying for his eternal happiness in heaven.

His body lies in state at Premier Chapel 1, Loyola Memorial Chapels, Guadalupe, Makati City.

Interment will be on August 5, 2006 at 11 a.m. at the Manila Memorial Park, Parañaque after the 8:00 a.m. Mass at the Loyola Chapels, Guadalupe, Makati City.

FLORENTINO LICAD BONDOC

of Malolos, Bulacan

October 16, 1913 – July 31, 2006

Peacefully joined our Lord on July 31, 2006

His children Ed and Au Cabrera, Jun and Jojie Bondoc; grandchildren, great grandchildren and relatives request to pray for the eternal repose of his soul.

His body lies in state at La Funeraria Paz, Inc., G. Araneta Avenue, Q.C.

Interment will be on Thursday, August 3, 2006 at Basilica Menore, La Immaculata Concepcion, Malolos, Bulacan at 1:00 p.m.

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are weary and burdened,
and I will give you rest."
Matthew 11:28

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INVITATION FOR PROPOSALS

ASSET DISPOSITION PROGRAM - PHASE 3

The Bases Conversion and Development Authority (BCDA) is inviting interested proponents to participate in Phase 3 of BCDA's Asset Disposition Program (ADP Phase 3). ADP Phase 3 involves the development and privatization of the approximately 12,036 square meter - Expanded Big Delta Lots (formerly known as the Government Center for Investment) located in Fort Bonifacio.

Interested proponents may submit their Letters of Interest to BCDA and can purchase the Terms of Reference (TOR) for ADP Phase 3 that outlines, among others, the requirements that will enable proponents to participate in the privatization.

The TOR for ADP Phase 3 will be ready for distribution to interested proponents starting on 21 July 2006 at the BCDA office. A non-refundable cost of the TOR is Ten Thousand Pesos (Php10,000.00), for each TOR, payable to the BCDA in Cash or Manager's Check.

A conference among interested proponents is tentatively set on 09 August 2006. The objective of the conference is to discuss the property that form part of ADP Phase 3, the TOR and other clarifications from interested proponents. Interested proponents will be informed of the final schedule and venue of the conference through contact numbers submitted to the BCDA.

Interested proponents can direct their inquiries to:

THE CHAIRMAN
ADP PHASE 3 COMMITTEE (ADP-3 Com)
Bases Conversion and Development Authority
2/f Bonifacio Technology Center, 31st St. cor. 2nd Ave.,
Bonifacio Global City, Taguig, Metro Manila

or they can contact Ms. Aileen R. Zosa or Ms. Bambie L. Andal at telephone numbers 816-6666 or 816-1043.

(Sgd.) **VICTOR V. ZABLAN**
Chairman
ADP Phase 3 Committee

(PDI–July 20, 26 & August 2, 2006)

Republic of the Philippines
PHILIPPINE HEALTH INSURANCE CORPORATION
Citystate Centre, 709 Shaw Boulevard, Pasig City
Healthline 637-9999 www.philhealth.gov.ph

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

No. 2006-004-g

BIDDING FOR THE LEASE OF OFFICE SPACES INTENDED FOR PHILHEALTH NCR-CENTRAL BRANCH OFFICE, SERVICE OFFICE AND OFFICE OF THE VICE-PRESIDENT FOR NCR GROUP

The **Philippine Health Insurance Corporation (PhilHealth)**, through the Corporate Operating Budget (COB) 2006, intends to apply the sum of **PhP 3,292,800.00** being the Approved Budget for the Contract (ABC) to payments under the contract for the Lease of Office Spaces Intended for PhilHealth NCR-Central Branch Office, Service Office and Office of the Vice-President for NCR Group. Bids received in excess of the ABC shall be automatically rejected at Bid opening.

PhilHealth now invites Bids from eligible Bidders for the said procurement with the following specifications:

Location

The location of the building should be along Quezon Avenue and near EDSA where it is easily accessible to all PhilHealth clientele, e.g. members, partners and health providers.

Space Requirement

The total space requirement (rentable) is approximately 2,100 square meters.

a. For the space requirement of PhilHealth Membership Assistance Center (PMAC), it must be at least 500 sq. m.
b. It must have at least 30 parking slots for PhilHealth clients and 15 of which are free of charge and reserved for PhilHealth Officers and Employees.

PMAC Location and Space Requirement

The location for PMAC must be situated at the ground floor of the building to be accessible and convenient for the members.

Building (Equipment and Facilities)

The building must be structurally sound as checked by the proper authorities.

The building must have the following equipment/facilities:

- Sub-metering for electrical and water supply;
- Fire protection system such as water sprinklers, smoke detectors and fire alarm system;
- Fire exits;
- Floor ceiling must be at least 2.2 meters in clear height;
- Comfort Rooms in each floor at least one (1) for male and one (1) for females;
- Space for pylon post for vertical signage;
- Standby generator;
- Grounding system;
- Lightning Arrester; and
- Removable/Detachable acoustic ceiling.

I.T. Requirements

The building must have the following:

- Available riser for data cables to pass through from one floor to another;
- Wire ways for network cables going from one room to another;
- At least 2 sq. m. provision for the installation of wireless communication equipment located at the rooftop (free of charge);
- The ceiling must have at least 0.30 meter clear space from the bottom of the beams for the installation of horizontal cabling of data cables;
- PhilHealth should be allowed to demolish portion of walls and floors for the installation of data cables and others; and
- Electrical room for the termination of data voice and electrical cables.

Basic Term

The basic term of the contract shall be for a period of four (4) months, subject for renewal.

Bidding will be conducted through open competitive bidding procedures using non-discretionary pass/fail criteria as specified in the Implementing Rules and Regulations Part A (IRR-A) of Republic Act 9184, otherwise known as the "Government Procurement Reform Act," and is restricted to Filipino Citizens/Sole Proprietorships, organizations with at least sixty percent (60%) interest or outstanding capital stock belonging to citizens of the Philippines, and to citizens or organizations of a country the laws of regulations of which grant similar rights or privileges to Filipino Citizens, pursuant to Republic Act 5183 and subject to Commonwealth Act 138. Only Bids from Bidders who pass the eligibility check will be opened. The bidder with the Lowest Calculated Bid (LCB) shall advance to the post-qualification stage in order to finally determine responsiveness of the bid to the technical and financial requirements. The contract shall then be awarded to the Lowest Calculated and Responsive Bidder (LCRB) who would be determined as such after the post-qualification procedure.

Interested Bidders may obtain further information from the **Office of the Secretariat for the Bids and Awards Committees (OSBAC)** in the Central Office of PhilHealth, Room 1107, 11th floor, Citystate Centre, 709 Shaw Blvd., Pasig City, and inspect the Bidding Documents from **8:30 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.**

A complete set of Bidding Documents should be purchased by interested Bidders from **July 31 to August 14, 2006** at the address below and upon payment of a non-refundable fee in the amount of **PhP 10,000.00** cash. The prospective Bidder or his authorized representative shall receive the Bidding Documents personally.

PhilHealth will hold a **Pre-Bid Conference** open to all interested parties on **August 15, 2006 at 10:30 a.m.** at the **OSBAC Conference Room** (Rm. 1106), PhilHealth Central Office, 11th floor, Citystate Centre, 709 Shaw Blvd., Brgy. Oranbo, Pasig City.

Bids and eligibility requirements must be delivered to the **OSBAC Conference Room** on or before **August 28, 2006, 10:30 a.m.** The official time shall be based on the wall clock located at the **OSBAC Conference Room.** Late Bids shall not be accepted.

Bid opening shall be on August 28, 2006, 10:30 a.m. at the **OSBAC Conference Room.** Bids will be opened in the presence of the Bidders' representatives who choose to attend.

CY 2004 to CY 2005 is the relevant period for contracts which will be required to be submitted by PhilHealth.

PhilHealth reserves the right to accept or reject any Bid, to annul the bidding process, and to reject all Bids at any time prior to contract award, without thereby incurring any liability to the affected Bidder or Bidders.

Office of the Secretariat for the Bids and Awards Committees in the Central Office
MR. JOSEPH O. VERGARA
Rm. 1107, 11th Floor Citystate Centre
709 Shaw Blvd, Brgy. Oranbo, Pasig City
Tel. (02) 637-9999 locals 1128, 1130 and 1830
e-mail add: osbac@philhealth.gov.ph
Facsimile No. 637-4735
www.philhealth.gov.ph

(Sgd.) ATTY. VALENTIN C. GUANIO
Chairperson
Bids and Awards Committee for Goods and Services

(PDI--July 29 & Aug. 2, 2006)

MANILA GOLF AND COUNTRY CLUB, INC.
HARVARD ROAD, FORBES PARK
MAKATI CITY

August 2, 2006

NOTICE OF AUCTION SALE

TO ALL MEMBERS AND THE GENERAL PUBLIC:

The Bidding Committee of Manila Golf and Country Club, Inc., hereby announces the auction sale of the following described property:

(a) one (1) individual proprietary membership certificate.
(b) one (1) corporate proprietary membership certificate.

Any interested party may submit his/its written bid beginning today until 4:00 pm, August 15, 2006 to the Office of the Club's General Manager.

The bid shall be subject to the following conditions:

(a) Minimum bid of P11,800,000.00 for individual proprietary membership certificate.
(b) Minimum bid of P13,000,000.00 for corporate proprietary membership certificate
(c) Bids shall be accompanied by manager's check equivalent to 20% of the bid price payable to the Manila Golf and Country Club, Inc. and the balance within three (3) days from notice of bid acceptance.
(d) Exemption from the transfer fee of P300,000.00
(e) Certificate will be issued immediately upon receipt of full payment and documentary stamp taxes.

(Sgd.) **CESAR CRUZ**
Chairman, Bidding Committee

(PDI--August 2, 2006)

ERA Oceanic REALTY GROUP
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Limited Lots !
15% d/p 3 to 12 yrs to pay
867-8913 to 17 / 0917-8479276

PNOC-ENERGY DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION
Energy Complex, Merritt Road
Fort Bonifacio, Taguig City 1634
Tel. No. 893-1320, Local 5285

PNOC The Energy Company

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND BID

The PNOC-Energy Development Corporation is inviting all interested suppliers to apply and submit sealed bids for the supply and delivery of the following:

Various Sizes of Gate Valves Under
FGT 53713 / FGT 53758 / FGT 53759 / FGT 53778 / FGT 61903 / FGT 61909 / FGT 61923 / FGT 61952
Approved Budget: PHP 14,824,000.00

Eligibility forms and bidding documents shall be available for issuance at the above address c/o **Roderick R. Cabantog** starting **August 2, 2006**, from 9:30 AM to 3:30 PM and upon payment of a non-refundable fee of P400.00 per document.

For purposes of clarifying certain matters, a pre-bidding conference shall be held on **August 10, 2006, 2:00 p.m.** at the above address.

Applications for eligibility and sealed bids shall be submitted to, and registered with the PNOC-EDC Supply, Property and Materials Management Division, at the above address, and thereafter dropped in the padlocked bid box thereat not later than **2:00 p.m. (Supply Management Department Office Wall Clock Time) of August 24, 2006**. Public opening of bids shall follow immediately thereafter. **Late bids shall not be accepted.**

Prospective bidders shall signify conformance to the bidding terms and conditions, as required, and shall ensure the same through proper submission/execution. Source of funding is from Internal Cash Generation of PNOC-EDC. All bids should be within the Approved Budget for the Contract in order to qualify.

PNOC-Energy Development Corporation reserves the right to annul the bidding process, to reject any or all bids, to waive any informality in the bids received and to accept such bid which is most advantageous to PNOC-EDC without thereby incurring liability to the affected bidder or bidders or any obligation to inform the affected bidder or bidders of the ground(s) for PNOC-EDC's action.

Chairman, Bids and Awards Committee I

(PDI--August 2 & 9, 2006)

IFC International Finance Corporation
World Bank Group

The International Finance Corporation, the private sector arm of the World Bank, has established a technical assistance program for Small and Medium Enterprises in the Philippines (PEP Philippines). The International Finance Corporation PEP-Philippines office intends to finance the assignment described below under a trust fund from the Canadian and Australian Governments.

Request for Expressions of Interest

The assignment: The assignment involves completing a study and analysis of the viability of various biofuel options as alternative energy sources for the Philippines.

Scope of Work: This study will require detailed analyses of the different biofuel options that are relevant to the Philippines. It will cover: an analysis of the Philippines agribusiness potential for the various feedstock that can be used in biodiesel and bioethanol; an analysis of the various conversion technologies available; highlighting infrastructural and consumer adoption challenges for biofuel uptake; the national regulatory environment for biofuels and renewable energy; and, a look at international best practice both in terms of government support, regulation and other key success factors to develop the biofuel sector. While this will be a country-wide review, particular focus will be on the southern island of Mindanao, where there is significant potential for the cultivation of various biofuel crops.

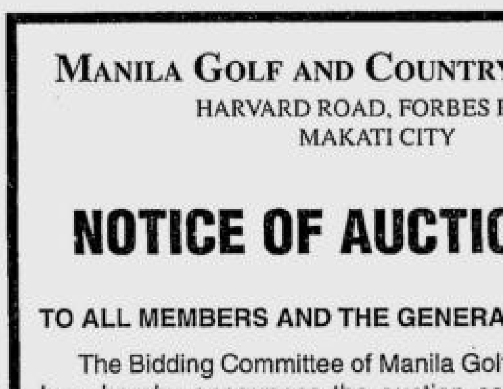
Timeframe: The engagement be for a period of two months ending by October 2006.

PEP-Philippines now invites eligible consultants/firms to indicate their interest in providing their services for the above mentioned engagement. Interested firms must provide information indicating that they are qualified to perform the services (brochures, description of similar assignments, experience in similar conditions, availability of appropriate skills among staff, etc).

Interested firms may obtain further information and deliver their Expressions of Interest at the address below by August 11, 2006.

Task Manager: Mr. William Beloe, Sustainability Program Manager
Address: International Finance Corporation
11/F, Tower One, Ayala Triangle
Ayala Avenue, Makati City 1226 Philippines
Telephone: +63 2 848 7333
Fax: +63 2 848 7339
E-mail: wbeloe@ifc.org

(PDI--August 2, 2006)



NFA OPENS TINDAHAN NATIN OUTLET IN TORRIJOS, MARINDUQUE

Marinduque Governor Carmencita Reyes (left) and Torrijos mayor Tom Pizzaro cut the ceremonial ribbon to officially open the Tindahan Natin outlet in barangay Poblacion in Torrijos, Marinduque. Assisting them are GRECON provincial president Danny Gonzales (second from right) and National Food Authority assistant director for region IV Tom Escarez (partly covered). The Tindahan Natin project is a government initiative that addresses hunger, poverty and unemployment by providing poor families access to affordable rice. These outlets will sell NFA's iron-fortified rice at P18 per kilogram and noodles at lower than market prices.

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Adj. Ayala Heights,QC
Marina Suites
Malate, Manila
For Sale/Lease 1-2BR,
As low as 20T/mo
867-8913 to 17
0917-8479276

PNOC-ENERGY DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION

Merrit Road, Fort Bonifacio, 1200 Taguig City, Philippines
P.O. Box 2102 MCPO, Tel. Nos. 893-6001 to 47/893-1320 Fax No. 840-1575

PNOC

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

PNOC-Energy Development Corporation (PNOC-EDC) invites interested contractors to apply for eligibility and to bid for the project:

Geothechnical Investigation, Sampling, and Laboratory Testing for the Proposed LGPF Reinjection Line to Pad 4RD Project
EDC 06-111

The Approved Project is Php 310,000.00 chargeable against PNOC-EDC fund. The contract duration is **thirty (30) calendar days.**

Application forms for eligibility and the bidding documents may be secured starting **August 3, 2006** upon payment of a non-refundable fee of **Pesos: Five Hundred (PhP 500.00)** from either of the following offices:

1. Contracts Administration Group, First Floor, Building V, PNOC-EDC, Fort Bonifacio, Merritt Road, Taguig City, or
2. Admin. Office of PNOC-EDC Leyte Geothermal Production Field

Interested bidders may start submitting their application for eligibility on **August 3, 2006**.

Site inspection is on **August 5, 2006**. For the purpose of clarifying certain issues, a pre-bid conference will be held on **August 15, 2006** at the Admin. Office of PNOC-EDC Leyte Geothermal Production Field. Itinerary for the site inspection and pre-bid conference shall be relayed to all prospective bidders.

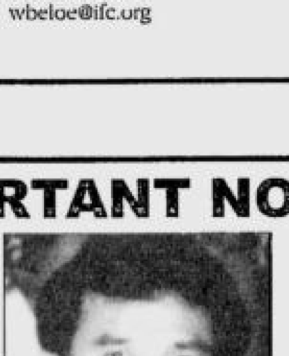
Application for Eligibility and sealed bids shall be received by the PNOC-EDC Contracts Administration Group First Floor, Building V, Energy Center, Merrit Road, Fort Bonifacio, Taguig, Metro Manila, not **later than 2:00 p.m. on (Contracts Administration Group Office Wall Clock Time) of August 31,** 2006 and shall be publicly opened immediately thereafter.

PNOC-EDC reserves the right to reject any or all bids or parts thereof, to waive any informality therein, to accept such bids or to award any part of the work to any bidder whose bid is considered most advantageous to PNOC-EDC.

(Sgd.) **FELICITO A. GESITE**
BAC Chairman

(PDI–August 2, 2006)

IMPORTANT NOTICE



FLORENCIO "JUN" TUALLA FERNANDEZ

Please be notified that the Regional Trial Court of Makati, Branch 141 issued a Decision in Criminal Cases Nos. 58411-14, People of the Philippines vs. JIMMY CABARLES, FLORENCIO T. FERNANDEZ ET AL. convicting both **FLORENCIO "JUN" TUALLA FERNANDEZ, JR.** and **JIMMY CABARLES** of the murder of the late Congressman Moises Espinosa, Sr. Warrants of Arrest and a Hold Departure Order against both persons have likewise been issued by the court.

If you should have knowledge as to the whereabouts of said person or possess any important information as to how he can be legally arrested at this time, please call:

Roque & Butuyan Law Offices:
887-4445, 887-3894, 750-3847 to 48.

Anyone who shall provide information that leads to the immediate and successful legal arrest of said person shall be rewarded the sum of

ONE HUNDRED THOUSAND PESOS
(PHP 100,000.00)

(PDI–August 2, 2006)

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Tel# 894-0282
Agencia de Makati
Tel# 889-7956

NOTICE OF DISSOLUTION

Notice is hereby given that **MAGNALAND DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION** with **SEC** Registration No. 71154 has shortened its corporate existence effective December 31, 2005, and that the Amended Articles of Incorporation dissolving the corporation will be filed with the Securities and Exchange Commission.

All persons having valid claims against said corporation are requested to present them at its office at the Roof deck, Multinational Bancorporation Centre, 6805 Ayala Avenue, Makati City, for settlement.

(Sgd.) **MELQUIADES T. MALABANAN**
Legal Counsel

(PDI--Aug. 2, 9 & 16, 2006)

MOTORING
Text us your feedback: inquirer mtr name/age/city/message to 2207 (Globe) or 283 (Smart)
E-mail: pr_motoring@inquirer.com.ph
Editor Cesar D. Mangawang

3,780 reasons to turn slumping auto parts industry around

To boost their survival chances, Filipino car parts makers start work on their own version of the Philippine utility vehicle. Starting price: P350,000. Any takers?

By Tessa R. Salazar

THE WHIR OF AUTO MACHINery is increasing in Asia. South Korea, the fifth largest car manufacturing country in the world and the autoparts mecca in this side of the globe, is slugging it out with automotive powerhouse Japan and emerging dragon China.

Thailand's auto industry, meanwhile, is one of the country's top performing sectors, as 1,800 auto parts makers/suppliers/service providers thrive. It is the main auto hub of South East Asia.

Not to be outdone is Malaysia, which has its own Proton (Iswara pegged at about $8,000 and above) and Perodua/Daihatsu (Kancil priced at $6,500 onward) to sell and its 590-strong auto component manufacturers. Both the manufacturers were granted the national car status and were given certain tax or duty exemptions.

Healthy numbers

The rest of Asia shows healthy numbers in the car parts and auto sales sectors: Indonesia has 250 auto component makers.

On the other hand, the Philippines' total auto parts and component makers, from 256 in 1996, has dwindled to 173 this year. What gives?

The Motor Vehicle Parts Manufacturers Association of the Philippines, one of two organizations of auto parts makers, analyzes the diminishing role of local auto parts makers. It explains that most parts for completely knocked down vehicles (CKDs) now comes with a package kit abroad, rendering local content from local parts manufacturers unnecessary.

MVPMAP adds that sales of completely built-up vehicles (CBUs) are on the rise.

60% local content

The increasing independence of CKDs from local parts manufacturers and the rising sales of CBUs are now forcing local auto parts manufacturers to venture into largely uncharted territory just to survive.

Though the details are still quite murky at this time, it's quite clear that MVPMAP is working on a locally built utility vehicle with 60 percent local content in cooperation with the Chamber of Automotive Manufacturers of the Philippines Inc. (Campi), Truck Manufacturers Association and the Board of Investments. This development was ascertained when the four groups recently created a working group called the Philippine Automotive Industry Development.

The working group has worked on a price sensitivity analysis and a Filipino market study and has come up with a plan to provide a new brand of utility vehicle priced at P350,000 or less. The design of the new vehicle has been said to closely resemble that of an Asian utility vehicle.

Ferdie Raquelsantos, MVPMAP spokesman and the working group's chair, said the group plans to initially produce 30,000 units in 2007.

'Gawad Kalinga'

Raquelsantos described the MVPMAP-initiated Philippine utility vehicles as the "Gawad Kalinga" of the auto industry, revealing that the group would target farm-to-market suppliers and cooperatives.

The local parts makers are set to lower the price by 30 percent for this particular project. Such a drastic price reduction would entail redesigning the parts to make them affordable but still safe and roadworthy.

"A lot of simplification on the design should bring the cost down," Raquelsantos added.

But will the unit sell? "Our study has revealed that the market for this particular vehicle is big enough," he assured.

MVPMAP admitted, though, that it would be impossible to create a 100 percent local content vehicle in the near future. Thus, the group is negotiating with certain Japanese car manufacturers and Chinese auto parts makers to possibly supply essential body parts and the engines.

The entry of a 350K "Philippine utility vehicle" is seen to have a positive effect on the local auto industry. "Instead of buying imported secondhand vehicles, the people now have the option to buy a brand-new utility vehicle at an affordable cost," said Rommel Juan, MVPMAP chair of exhibits and missions.

QS9000 or TS16949 certified

In an attempt to dispel the image of locally made products as inferior, Raquelsantos stressed that most local parts makers are now QS9000 or TS16949 certified.

For several years, MVPMAP has been exporting wiring harnesses, filters, gear boxes (transmissions) radiators, tires, silencers, batteries, exhaust pipes, brakes, clutches and alloy wheels, to name a few. As of 2005, major export markets are Japan (32 percent), United States (23 percent) and Thailand (17 percent), Canada (4 percent), Indonesia (3.75 percent).

The local auto and parts industry had its heyday in 1996, when CKDs peaked at 141,000 units (87 percent of the total market) and CBUs numbered 21,000.

Last year, there have been only 57,000 CKD units (59 percent) and 39,500 CBUs for a total of 97,000 units—representing a sales level that has gone flat for eight straight years.

Silver lining

Local autoparts makers, at least those that are still around, see a silver lining among the clouds. They said there are 3,780 solutions—representing the number of car parts and components inside a vehicle—to turn the slump around.

John T. Lee, MVPMAP director, said the reason Korea reached its status was its nationalism and pride as a people. This included patronizing Korean-made products and being proud of it.

Perhaps local parts makers should also do a bit of tinkering with the Pinoy psyche while embarking on its ambitious people's utility vehicle.

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		15% DP	Monthly Amortization ([illegible])	50% DP	Monthly Amortization ([illegible])
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Jazz 1.3 S MT	P650,000	P97,500	P12,823	P325,000	P7,543
CR-V 2WD 5P MT	P999,000	P149,850	P19,480	P499,500	P11,366

* All plans are subject to bank approval (BPI Family Savings Bank and RCBC Savings Bank)

Per DTI-NCR Permit No. 2090 Series of 2006

Visit any authorized dealers for details:

Metro Manila

Dealer	Numbers
Honda Cars Makati, Inc.	Tel No.: (02) 8524181, Fax No: 8521158
Honda Cars Alabang	Tel No: (02) 8077889, Fax No: 8095052
Honda Cars Kalookan, Inc.	Tel No: (02) 3665701, Fax No: 3618445
Honda Cars Pasig	Tel No: (02) 6342730, Fax No: 6372982
Honda Cars Quezon City, Inc.	Tel. Nos.: (02) 7126850 to 61, Fax No.: 7328555
Honda Cars Shaw	Tel No.: (02) 7171681, Fax No. 7257673
Honda Cars Manila	Tel No: (02) 5624548, Fax No: 5647336
Honda Cars Fairview	Tel Nos: (02) 9352655, 9352017, Fax No.: 9357854
Honda Cars Marikina	Tel. Nos.: (02) 9426202, 9980512, Fax No.: 9423561

Provincial

Dealer	Numbers
Honda Cars Laguna, Inc.	Tel Nos.: (049) 5627713 to 14, Fax No: (049) 5627712
Honda Cars Pangasinan, Inc.	Tel. Nos.: (075) 5221488 to 89 Fax No. (075) 5173739
Honda Cars Pampanga, Inc.	Tel No: (045) 9635119, Fax No: (045) 9635554
Honda Cars Cebu, Inc.	Tel No.: (032) 2313502, Fax No.: (032) 2314488
Honda Cars Negros Occidental	Tel No: (034) 7078000, Fax No: (034) 4411278
Honda Cars Davao, Inc.	Tel Nos.: (082) 2217406, 2222171, Fax No: (082) 2217407
Honda Cars Cagayan De Oro	Tel Nos: (088) 8584010 to 12, Fax No (088) 8584015
Honda Cars Tarlac, Inc.	Tel. Nos.: (045) 9828002 to 06, Fax No: (045) 9828007
Honda Cars Mandaue	Tel. No.: (032) 4223700, Fax No.: (032) 4223600
Honda Cars Isabela, Inc.	Tel. No.: (078) 6521245, Fax No: (078) 6521248
Honda Cars Gen. Santos, Inc.	Tel Nos: (083) 5535796 to 97, Fax No: (083) 3013109
Honda Cars Iloilo	Tel Nos.: (033) 508-8400, 508-8522, Fax No: (033) 329-7763

O-rings and preventive maintenance

ON THE ROAD

Aida Sevilla-Mendoza

A RECENTLY SENT TO THIS COLUMN an e-mail on the wear and tear of the O-rings of her Isuzu Trooper. From the day she got her Trooper in 2001, Ms R.T. writes, she was very happy with it—until she encountered a major problem with its engine.

"We have been advised that due to normal wear and tear, the fuel injection system which the mechanics say uses a common rail system has been leaking fuel into the water cooling system and has destroyed the cylinders," Ms R.T. disclosed. "The repair is going to cost us an arm and a leg. Despite the fact that we have been bringing this vehicle to the *casa* even twice a year, to be saddled with such a major defect and expense is just too much, I think.

Same problem

"We also found out that we were not the only ones with the same problem. There was another Isuzu Trooper in the *casa* and this one was even model 2002. My husband drives a much older model Isuzu and has not experienced this fuel leaking into the water cooling system with his Isuzu. Perhaps it's the new (but defective) fuel injection technology... There are a lot of other Isuzu fans and Trooper owners out there and this is sadly **not** the usual Isuzu standard with a reputation for excellence."

When Ms R.T.'s complaint was forwarded to Isuzu Philippines Corp., service manager Al David noted that her Trooper is already 5 years old and has traveled more than 97,000 kilometers. Thus it is no longer covered by the manufacturer's warranty of two years and 50,000 kilometers whichever comes first.

Complete

Mr. David added that furthermore, warranty coverage is hinged on complete periodic maintenance services (PMS) being performed on the unit and per the dealer's records, seven out of the 11 PMS scheduled during the 50,000 km warranty period was not done on Ms R.T.'s unit. After the warranty period, the Trooper in question was not brought to the dealer for two of the four recommended PMS checkups. This shows that the unit lacks the necessary PMS checkups that would ensure optimum performance of the engine, he stressed, and due to lack of PMS, the vehicle's warranty was voided.

"IPC considers PMS an indispensable requirement in warranty issues because every PMS schedule has a recommended program designed by our technical experts to ensure the maximum performance of the vehicle," Mr. David continued. "It is crucial that customers do not miss even a single PMS to make sure that all required checkups, adjustments, repairs, etc. are performed according to schedule. Pages 10 and 27 of the New Vehicle Warranty and Maintenance Booklet state that the warranty does not cover conditions resulting from lack of required maintenance services and that all required periodic services should be performed by an authorized IPC dealer to guarantee that only genuine parts are used."

No 'defect'

As for Ms R.T.'s observation that the Trooper's fuel injection system could be defective, Mr. David pointed out that despite incomplete maintenance services, her unit ran for almost five years for more than 97,000 kilometers. "It is highly probable that the cause of the problem is not a "defect" as such would have prevented it from traveling this far and this long," he averred. "It is also highly possible that the lack of preventive maintenance and normal wear and tear contributed to or even caused the unit's problem."

While Mr. David admitted that IPC has received "a few similar claims" about the Trooper, he stressed that like the case of Ms R.T., their units did not have the necessary PMS. "In as much as we would like to accommodate such customers," he concluded, "our warranty policies prevent us from doing so."

Noticed

My take on this is that had Ms R.T. faithfully followed the Trooper's PMS schedule, her IPC dealer would have noticed the wear and tear of the O-rings of the fuel injectors and immediately replaced them to avert fuel leaking into the water cooling system. Am I right, Mr. David?

An O-ring, by the way, is the simplest and most common sealing device used in numerous systems. O-rings function as compact and reliable sealing devices against high fluid pressure. They are made of special rubber and plastic formulations, usually silicon-based.

TODAY'S BUMPER STICKER: It was recently discovered that research causes cancer in rats.

(E-mail comments to asevilla@inquirer.com.ph.)

MPV confessions and the Toyota Previa

MY DRIFT

Andre Palma

A CONVERSATION IN MY HEAD started when Toyota confirmed my request for a test of the 2006 Previa. Admit it, I said to myself. You aren't really that excited about borrowing an MPV (Multipurpose Vehicle) for a weeklong test.

Rationalization continued at this point. You are young, mister motoring hack and your body is looking for an adrenaline fix, something far from the sobering reality check that comes with vehicles that are really just about transportation, simply moving loads of people from A to B. Oh what the heck, you are a professional and should objectively review what's on schedule, right? The Previa must be dealt with.

So I sat for a while and considered the enigma that is the MPV. The admission must be made that I, as a driver and motorist, cannot make heads or tails of the practicality of a seven-seat crossbreed between a van and an estate, and especially an expensive one at that.

Utilitarian

Largely utilitarian in basic design and intention, it is very often that this segment's all too premium pricing relegates these vehicles to luxury transport duties, therefore losing much of the meaning of the first two letters of the MPV acronym. I mean this obviously qualifies as some sort of vehicle, but the question being: is there anything still multipurpose about it?

Very seldom do we see these multimillion-peso cars shuttling the week's wet market score or serving car pool duty for a gaggle of sweat soaked grade school kids. The detailing costs for constantly spilt *bagoong* and film upon film of fast-food grease would just be astronomical. On the other hand, executives, lawyers and doctors would logically make much less of a mess in these MPVs, especially when they remember just how much they paid for theirs.

Driving impressions

Initial driving impressions of this very premium Toyota are typical for the market segment. MPVs generally drive on pavement better than straight-cut vans, AUVs and SUVs but fall quite short of piloting a sedan, much less a well-sorted one. In this case, customers get the same 2.4-liter VVTi, four-cylinder engine as can be had with the Camry, a very decent power plant in any book.

The engine is actually quite sufficient and easily propels the Previa to highway cruising speeds, also allowing for some ability at overtaking. Braking lacks the modulation one will need to chauffer about in complete smoothness, but at least you know that antilock braking system (ABS) and electronic brake force distribution (EBD) should help this 1,800+ kilogram mass to stop as abruptly as it can, when needed. Suspension is designed with comfort in mind, sacrificing driver feedback so that passenger's backsides can be pampered.

Best role

It must be said, therefore, that the best role to play in a Previa is the one of passenger. The cabin is clearly geared for the upper strata of motorists, there is no shortage of leather, the wood trim is sedate and the seating very, very inviting for those short power naps during the commute between the day's social and business appointments. Dual zone air-conditioning further reinforces the importance of passenger comfort in the Previa concept.

The tested 2.4Q model's list of features spells out "high specification" loud and clear. Factory installed HID head lamps are standard. Both passenger doors, left and right, swing out automatically with the help of electric motors. A smart key system is in place, doing away with the need to slot anything into the ignition before starting a drive. There are even electric heaters for the two front seats, an option that continues to baffle the author up to the time of writing this.

With prices for this vehicle well north and far clear of the P2 million mark, potential customers will but logically demand some degree of luxury and expect a generous amount of comfort. I can't really blame them for that. Good thing that this MPV seems to be targeted to directly address those customer needs. Transport in relative luxury is what this model of the Previa is obviously about; it is up to the consumer if they see it that way at all. Trouble is I think I need a little bit more convincing.

The new Subaru factotum

FULL TANK

Al Mendoza

THE MONIKER "CHE GUEVARRA" OF THE Philippine motoring industry is but apt to Ariel de Jesus, whose other alias "SPO2" has repeatedly put Ariel on the defensive in explaining that tag to his grandmother every time they meet. Granny just wouldn't want to have a grandson for a cop.

Che Guevara, of course, is that Colombian-born hero of the Cuban revolution who combined with Fidel Castro to install the socialist order in Cuba in 1956.

Ariel de Jesus is as popular as Che Guevara—in the local automotive world, that is. There's no motoring media person more popular than Ariel, he with the charcoal-black hair, black, piercing eyes and the comfy ways of a regular guy. Ariel sets the standards in media blitzkriegs and is easily the best student ever of that media miracle man of motoring himself, Vince Socco.

Ariel has been likened to Che Guevara for three reasons.

One, Ariel is a rebel. But he rebels positively, though. Like Che, Ariel loves to rebel—but always with a cause. Normally, his rebellion would repel people, his peers even, if not his superiors. But that's only in the beginning. Once they've grasped the "essence of his rebellion," they almost automatically become advocates of his own rebellion. Like Che, Ariel would almost always win, happily, in the end.

Two, Ariel is a risk-taker. He loves the unorthodox, goes for the uncommon, abnormal if you wish. Like Che, Ariel defies conventions, preferring to take the un-chartered course over the beaten path. Miraculously enough, he'd emerge victorious—almost always.

Three, Ariel is an incurable romantic, going for a Mozart or a Picasso when a Cayabyab or a Dalena would be as good an option—at a cheaper price yet. But he can be moody, as well, eccentric if not idiosyncratic. Take for example, his decision to bolt Toyota early this year and move to Subaru—which brings me to the meat of this piece.

Up to now, many are still puzzled, if not totally shocked, over Ariel's transfer to Subaru—a move described to be as bizarre as Madonna's wardrobe.

I mean, Toyota is an automotive giant, almost No. 1 now in the world at that in lieu of General Motors' shaky financial position. Although not a new kid in town, so to speak, as it actually manufactured the world's first minicar in 1958 (Model 360), Subaru is the most unlikely car company that one can imagine Ariel would hop into from Toyota. If he moved maybe to Honda or Mitsubishi, or even Isuzu, Ariel might not have caused tremendous eyebrow-raising reaction from the motoring media. His bosses at Toyota, notably Danny Isla, had begged him—almost—not to leave.

But there he is now, Ariel, almost synonymous to Toyota, a new Subaru factotum. Just recently, he was in the forefront of the launch in the Philippines of the Motor Image Pilipinas Inc., which infused $4 million into the country's economy in unleashing four models to do battle with the established giants hereabouts like Honda, Hyundai, Mitsubishi, Isuzu, Jaguar, Volvo, Ford, Nissan and, well, Toyota.

So, from Toyota to Subaru, Ariel has paraded during the launch Subaru's Outback 3.0, Impreza WRX 2.5-liter turbo, the Forester "as the ultimate crossover SUV," and the Legacy 2.0—all relatively unknown models to the country's discerning car buffs. I wasn't there, but my colleagues who attended the launch said that Ariel, with his usual flair for drama at the rostrum, outdid himself.

Surely, the Toyota years would put Ariel in good stead at Subaru.

And definitely, with his Che Guevara ways—a bit tempered now, maybe? Ariel de Jesus, while at Subaru, will do his Granny proud.

* * *

QUOTE ME. Eat just enough when driving long-distance to fight off that sleepy feeling.

* * *

E-mail: menju@pldtdsl.net

World's top road engineers, experts to convene in Manila

By Charles E. Buban

FROM THE LAST DECADE UP to the present, the Philippines has built more new roads than has been in previous periods, according to the Philippine chapter of the Road Engineering Association of Asia and Australasia (REAAA).

And with almost 29 million meters of national road and close to 6,000 national bridges already constructed, the association believes the country is currently experiencing a significant road progress and transportation developments.

"The country would be very proud to report this update before road engineers and heads of road authorities in Asia who will be gathering here in Manila for the 12th REAAA International Conference from Nov. 20 to 24," said Public Works and Highways Undersecretary and REAAA president Salvador Pleyto during the event's official launch held in Mandaluyong City.

Jointly hosted by the DPWH, the Road Engineering Association of the Philippines, and the REAAA-Philippine Chapter, this year's international conference adopted the theme "On the Road to the Future."

Privileged

"The Philippines is privileged to host the international conference and the theme in a way is relevant as it describes the current road developments and progress taking place in the country," he said.

In fact, included in the participants' itinerary is a visit to the newly rehabilitated 99-kilometer North Luzon Expressway as well as the ongoing P27.4-billion 94-km Subic-Clark-Tarlac Expressway project.

Public Works Secretary Hermogenes Ebdane Jr. said during the formal launch that the international conference, held once every three years, is also a perfect venue for road engineers, contractors, suppliers and the academe to exchange ideas and share project experiences with their counterparts in the region.

Ebdane added that industry experts will also share their state-of-the-art technology and lessons learned from their various project engagements in their respective countries.

Meaningful exchange

"This year's conference is expected to highlight meaningful exchange of ideas, opinions and experiences by experts and participants in various countries who are engaged in making road engineering a vital tool in nation-building. We should remember that an expansive and better road network is important in meeting the changing needs of the industry, commerce, tourism and the community," Ebdane said.

Topics to be discussed in the technical sessions include road and bridge asset management, environment and sustainability, heavy vehicle dynamics, local area traffic management, pavement design and performance, project management and financing, road construction and maintenance road management and administration, road planning and design, and road safety engineering.

Other topics are road user behavior, traffic engineering (including intelligent transportation system), transport economics and freight, and transport planning and evaluation (for inquiries about the forthcoming conference, the REAAA-Philippine Chapter can be reached at their e-mail address, fiera@info.com.ph or visit website www.fmi.com.ph).

Although REAAA was formally launched in June 1973, the organization traces its roots back in the 1940s when various Asian countries saw the importance of road engineering technology and expertise as a key to national progress.

The REAAA, with around 1,300 members in 26 countries today, primarily aims to be the focal point in professional knowledge sharing in road engineering across international boundaries.

MOTORSCOPE

BIRTHDAY CELEBRATION
Mild Seven Renault F1 team driver Fernando Alonso celebrated his 25th birthday on July 29 at the Hockenheim circuit, where he finished 5th in the German GP. The youngest Formula One World Champion (2005) is currently leading in the standings for the 2006 F1 driver's title at 100 points.

Nismo races ahead in Super GT Series

NISMO RACED AHEAD IN THE TEAM CHAMPIONSHIP rankings of the 2006 Super GT Series after two of its racing 350Zs in the GT500 Class registered podium finishes in the 5th round of the series held at Sportsland Sugo last July 23. Should the team's winning streak continue in the next four races, Nismo can set a record in the series by winning its 4th consecutive Team Championship title.

Two race-special 350Zs from Xanavi-Nismo and the Motul-Autech finished 2nd and 3rd, respectively, in the premiere GT500 Class. The Xanavi-Nismo Z started 4th from the starting grid, followed by the Motul-Autech Z. Nismo is the only team to register podium finishes in all of the races in this year's series.

In the last race held at the Sepang International Circuit in Malaysia, the two Nismo Zs also registered a 2nd and 3rd place finish, demonstrating the team's resolve to continue its winning tradition that started from the days of the Japan Grand Touring Championships (JGTC). The next race of the season will be at Suzuka, where the Xanavi-Nismo Z took 2nd place last year.

In the GT300 Class, two Nissan 350Zs also registered impressive wins, with the the Direzza Z driven by Kota Sasaki and Taku Bamba finishing 1st, which was followed at the finish line 0.7 seconds by the Endless Advan CCI Z. On pole at the start of the race was a Lamborghini Murcielago.

In the Driver Championship standings of the GT500 Class, Michael Krumm, who drives the Motul-Autech Z with Richard Lyons, is now tied at third with 46 points. With only four races to go, Krumm can move up the standings since the driver occupying 2nd in only has 47 points. He may still have a chance at the elusive Driver's Championship.

Nismo's performance in the first five races of the series is perhaps one of the best and most consistent in the team's history. Should the team score more podium finishes in the next four races, it has a great chance of clinching its 4th consecutive Team Championship title.

What is also remarkable about the Nismo's sterling performance in the first five races of the season is the competition has become more fierce, with the entry of the Lexus SC430 and the improvements made by teams fielding the Honda NSX.

"NISMO has an envious heritage in the history of the JGTC and we want to establish the same in the Super GT Series. The entry of more teams in the series, especially the known marques, only challenges Nismo more to the delight of the fans of the series," explained Raymond Tribdino, senior manager for market and product planning at Nissan Motor Philippines Inc.

BUSINESS

BAP guards against price fixing

Group's move follows BSP investigation of MART1

By Doris C. Dumlao

THE BANKERS ASSOCIATION OF THE PHILIPPINES is taking measures to guard against manipulation of interest rates on government securities.

BAP president Ramon Sy said the association's fixed income trading platform Philippine Dealing & Exchange Corp. (PDEX) would be tapped to ensure transparency in the trading of securities.

"We definitely want to make sure that there will actually be no manipulation whatsoever. Otherwise, the reputation of the market, of the Philippines, will suffer and it's not going to serve any one any good," he said.

The BAP move came on the heels of the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas' investigation of MART1, the current interest rate benchmark, due to allegations that it was manipulated at the height of the selldown of unit investment trust funds last May.

Some money market traders were suspected of colluding to cushion the fall in bond prices, apparently to protect the net asset value of funds held by their banks.

MART1 is based on the best bids on various bond tenors and is used as a benchmark to determine interest rates.

PDEX president Vicente Castillo said the fixed income exchange could serve the market's benchmarking needs.

Asked what would happen to MART1, Sy said: "We might change the formula or we may not. It's not really relevant, but the composition of that benchmark will remain the same."

The Money Market Association of the Philippines, however, categorically denied allegations of price manipulation.

The BSP nevertheless insisted that that an SRO should police banks' market operations.

Wick Veloso, treasurer at HSBC Philippines who is part of the BAP's open market committee, said the association would review the MART1 benchmark to pave the way for the market's shift to a benchmark based on done deals instead of best bids.

Veloso, who headed the committee which created MART1 in 1998, said: "Remember, the best bid is far from the done deal, so you have to graduate into the done deal."

"Once you graduate into the done deal, the question is what is the volume that will tell you that the done deal represents the majority will of the market," Veloso said.

Receipt drive seen yielding ₱6B in taxes

By Michelle V. Remo

THE DEPARTMENT OF FINANCE EXPECTS TO generate as much as P6 billion in additional revenues from the newly launched raffle program encouraging consumers to demand official receipts.

Finance Secretary Margarito Teves said in a speech yesterday during the anniversary of the Bureau of Internal Revenue, an attached agency of the DOF, that the "Premyo Sa Resibo" raffle promo could help shore up the BIR's tax collection without imposing new taxes.

Teves said the program would partly address the estimated P50 billion to P60 billion in tax leakages every year arising partly from the non-issuance of receipts.

"Let us all demand receipts from establishments to reduce the tax leaks. We should focus on improving tax collection efficiency," Teves said.

The finance chief added that following the implementation of several tax measures, such as the 2-percentage-point hike in the value added tax rate to 12 percent, priority should now shift to ensuring efficient tax collection.

Under the Premyo Sa Resibo (PSR) raffle promo, consumers with official receipts have a chance to win as much as P1 million in cash.

Yesterday, the BIR named the first five winners of P1 million each during the first draw of the PSR raffle promo. The raffle draw was done electronically.

For the first draw, Smart, Talk 'N Text, Addict Mobile and Sun Cellular phone subscribers were allowed to join.

Globe subscribers will soon be allowed to join following the recent collaboration between Globe Telecom and the BIR.

The next raffle is scheduled on Sept. 1.

In the next raffle, there will be five major winners of P1 million each and 10 winners of P100,000 each.

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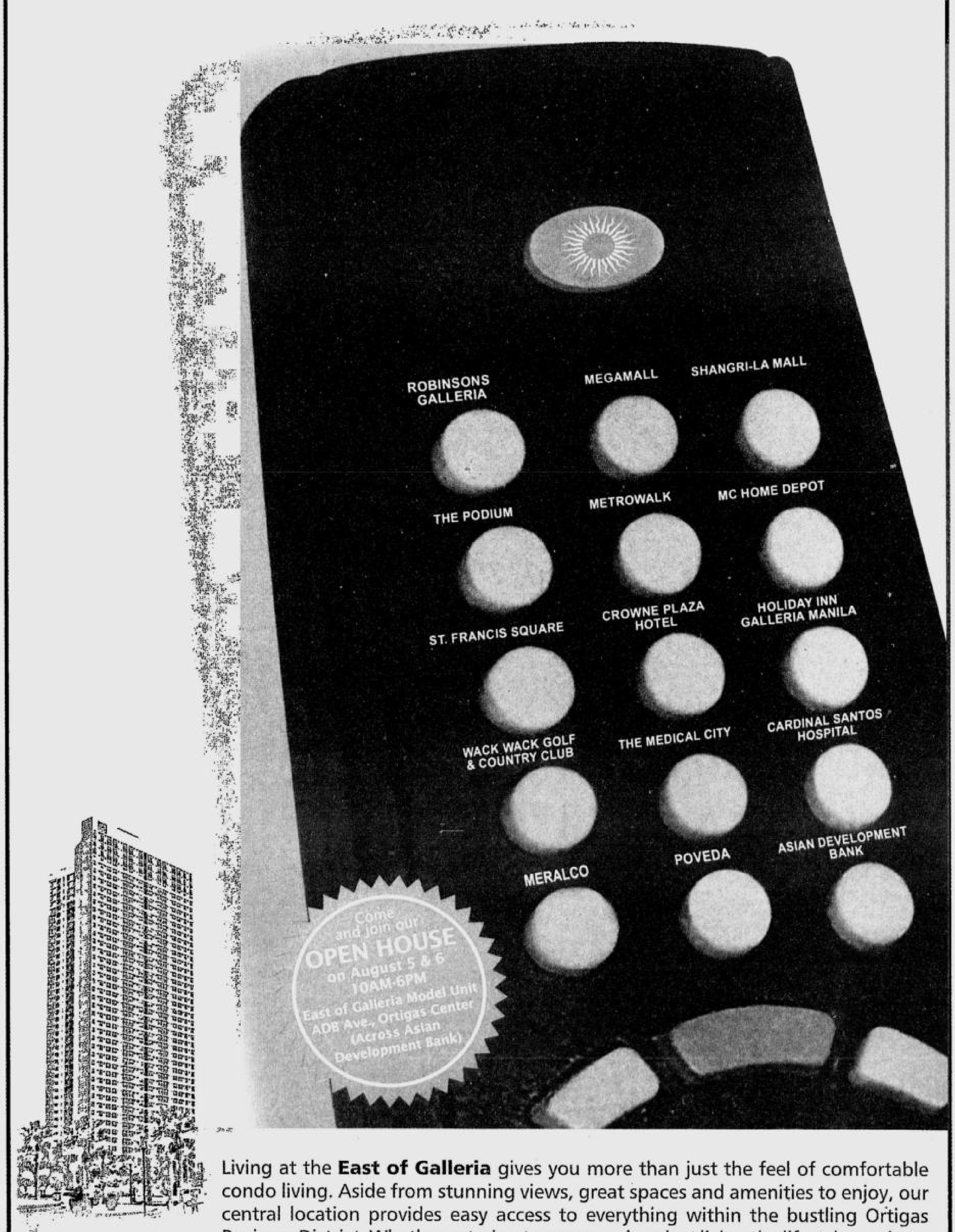
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What it's like,
Part two

We might never run out of stories.

Here's another dose of interesting tales from real people.

In this issue, read about what it's like to stalk a rock star, to become a gay rights advocate, to be cheated on, to be in a coma for four days.

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Girl, boy, 'bakla,' 'tomboy'...

By Meldita

WHENEVER I SHOW SOMEONE my family picture, their eyebrows bunch in confusion.

They say, "Is that your *kuya*?" And I say, "No, that's my *ate*." And when they say "Is that your *ate*?" I say, "No, that's my *kuya*."

We all end up laughing. It always amuses them.

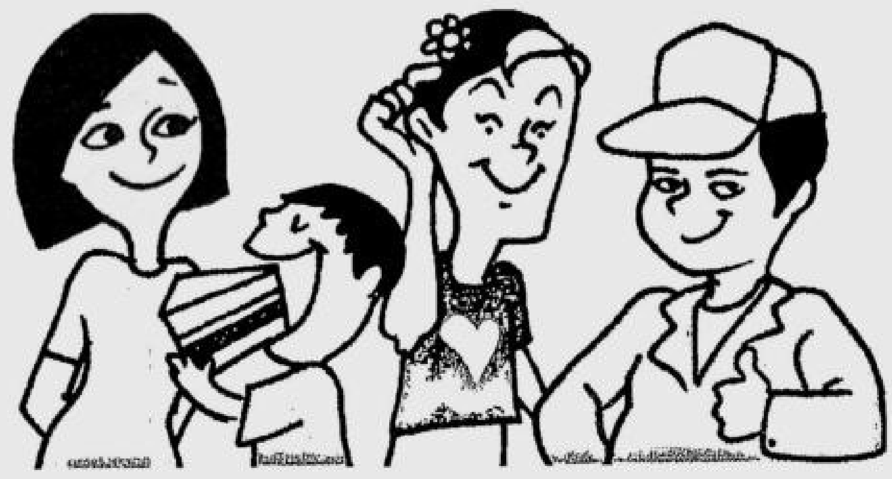
Yes, to explain it crudely, "*bakla kuya ko at tomboy ate ko*." And despite the obvious gender mix-up, Kuya is still "Kuya" and Ate is still "Ate" to me and our youngest brother.

Our case is probably the type they show in "Balitang K"—an "unusual" story, because we have all the genders represented in our brood.

Kuya is 27, three years older than me, but lankier. We used to argue over my clothes, which he wore because he cross-dressed (fashionably, of course). I would get so agitated when I couldn't wear the outfit I wanted because he got to it first. My cabinet had broken handles and couldn't even have an improvised lock, so it was such a predicament.

Fortunately, he began building up his own wardrobe, and I ended up borrowing his fashion picks. They were funkier than the ones in my closet, and now I even get praised for them at the office.

Our case is probably the type they show in 'Balitang K'—an 'unusual' story, because we have all the genders represented in our brood



"They're my Kuya's," I say to those who ask where I got it.

When we go out together, two things usually happen. People would think that we're sisters (he's good at makeup, too), or they realize he's gay—and think I am gay, too (he's 5'9" and I'm 5'7", after all). To solve this, I make sure they hear me speak and that they see my neck—"Hello, *wala akong* Adam's apple!"

Kuya worked as a karaoke master for more than a year at a bar near our place. When our Tita arrived from the US for a visit, we watched one of his shows. She ended up crying out of sheer happiness—maybe even pride—for my Kuya, who sang (or rather croaked) "Through the Fire" for us with all his might.

His sexual escapades are very colorful, to say the least. He's had more boyfriends than I'll ever have, and even has men begging at his feet! I remind him to be cautious, but now that he has a steady boyfriend, he says he's never been this loyal.

Surpassing dedication

Ate, meanwhile, is what we call "crazy" over her girlfriends. She's had about five, I think, and the dedication she has for them usually surpasses her dedication to us, her family. She spends whatever money she has on them, she wakes up really early for them (which is actually a difficult thing for her)—that's the way she loves 'em.

But when they break up, count a few weeks and, *hala*! She's got a new girlfriend (they even leave their boyfriends for her). *Ang pogi niya eh.*

Ate is the family sous chef. We always ask her to whip up things we've tasted somewhere else, and she's good at experimenting. My youngest brother, the growing, always hungry kid, adores her dishes but never ever praises her for it (he's nasty). She and my younger brother have a world of their own when they're in front of the PC playing RPGs, while my Kuya talks to me in gay lingo when he makes *kuwento* about the latest happenings in his *barkada*.

Give Kuya any kind of makeup and he'll be happy, but when we gifted him one Christmas with this silicone stick-on bra, he was ecstatic. Now he wouldn't have to put socks or tissue inside his bra; just this soft jiggly thing was enough.

Ate, on the other hand, loved a sports bra I gave her. It was supposed to be mine but it flattened the chest (which I didn't like), so it went to her because she liked that. She had bigger, fuller breasts that I wish I had!

Sometimes, I wish I had a real Kuya. You know, the Big Brother who protects you from all the bad men, who'd be responsible for the family after Mom got paralyzed and Dad struggled abroad, who'd be spoiling his younger siblings. Or a real Ate who I could swap love stories and heartaches with, one I could count on to shop or watch a movie with me, who'd also dote on her only sister.

I wanted to be taken care of, but it was I who took care of them instead.

I just pray they realize that life is not all fun, especially when you're 26 or 27 and you've a big family to look after. That even if they don't plan to have kids, they still have their own futures to think of.

Though sometimes I want to strangle them, I still love them to death.

Confessions of an ex-groupie

What it's like to stalk a poet-rock star

By Penny Lane

I FORMULATED THE IDOLATRY Theory, which says, "Everyone is bound to have strong sense of idolatry; that at a particular time in one's life, one is ought to be obsessed with a well-known character or group (i.e. TV/movie star, musician, politician, boy band, athlete, artist, movement) to the point of being ridiculously passionate about that person or group." The key word there is "ridiculously."

I did fall for one. I could practically fill out the dude's bio-data for him. All he had to do was put his thumb mark.

For me it was a fixation, more of a delusion, actually. I first saw him way back in college when he was an informal instructor and was attending an activity in the writing center. It was like seeing an apparition.

I only knew the basics then: He was a poet, he had a jazz band and he was the frontman.

"So that's him," I thought, "The dude who wrote those cool poems I read in the library."

Somehow, the gods or the muses or Cupid toyed with me and the next thing I know, I was a full-fledged stalker.

I started out as a fan—I listened to his songs, read his works, read what he read, tried to write like him.

He indirectly reintroduced me to literature. I don't think I would have given a hoot about Borges, Borroughs or the Beat Generation if I didn't know he read 'em. I started calling myself a "groupie" of this poet-musician.

It was supposed to be a healthy thing for an aspiring writer, till I started looking for his battered sedan (whose plate number I memorized) each school day in the university parking lot just to know if I'd see him.

He was shorter than the average guy, definitely no matinee-idol material with his receding hairline, thick goatee, gaunt frame and beer belly. Still, I called him god.

Maybe it was his pseudo-celebrity stature that got me. He was a tri-media entity at that time, simultaneously appearing on TV, radio and print. Or maybe it was the way he slouched and moved in a loose-jointed way. He was a modern-day beatnik and I adored him.

Network of spies

I became a stalker, but that didn't mean I followed him everywhere although I knew his address and home number by heart.

All in school knew I worshipped him and they found it cute. I was like a 13-year-old screaming her head off for a boyband.

I stalked through other people. I had volunteers. I somehow developed a network of spies who fed me information on his whereabouts and activities. And these were our common friends, writers, poets, musicians, even faculty members. So whether he was at a gig in QC, attending a writing conference in the Visayas, or writing about artifacts in Belgium, I'd know what he was into.

I could practically fill out the dude's bio-data for him. All he had to do was put his thumb mark

The great problem then was how he would know me. We had been introduced numerous times and I was pretty sure he saw me as just one of the students. The pressing problem then was "how do I score?"

'Penny Lane fantasies'

He was paneling for a school-wide literary fellowship and I knew it was my chance. But first I had to become a fellow to the writer's guild where being a member was like being in a frat. So one had to practically go through a literary hazing before one could become a fellow.

I had to submit five poems that would be screened by writers and the director of the writing center; take an exam; and undergo an interview. And I had no knowledge in poetry then save for a few Nerudas.

Guess what? I passed. With my "Penny Lane fantasies" as the driving force.

I got his cell phone number for business matters and that could have been the worst day of his life. The electronic stalking started.

Almost friendly

He was friendly at first but things got offhand. I texted him madly for months, professing, uhm, love. He didn't reply.

Shorty after graduation, I was convinced I could kick the habit and the idol-worship would stop.

To celebrate my "freedom," I rounded up some friends for a few drinks (some of them he knew, too), but things got wayward. We all got drunk and things became bloody.

Psychocircus bloody day

On the way home, a guy friend and I fell hard on the damp street pavement and he smashed his head. He lost his two front teeth. We both sustained bruises in the face.

I was hysterical as we took him to the hospital. I did what only an obsessed drunk could: I texted my idol at 4 a.m.:

"I am so f---ing drunk. This guy lost his teeth in an accident and we are in the hospital. This is all because of you. Die."

The morning after, he told a common friend, a schoolmate, to relay this message to me:

"Do you know Penny? Could you please do me a favor? Please tell her to f--- off."

I seriously considered seeing a shrink because of that pathetic scandal. I was depressed for a month.

Groupie rehab

It was over. I gave away all the stuff that had to do with him—CDs, autographed book, clippings, even attempts to write poetry. I stopped watching gigs and poetry readings altogether. I've been clean since.

I started working in a publication and years later had an officemate-friend who turned out to be his pal, too.

Officemate and I agreed to watch rock star's gig. He reintroduced us and rock star nearly choked on his beer and said: "*Kilala kita ah!*"

"Sorry for all the troubles before," I said, handing him a copy of his new book for his autograph.

"*Wala yun,*" he replied.

I started watching gigs again and brought along people who would bring other people to the gigs, too. These are people who buy CDs and merchandise and, had it been a networking scheme, I'd be on top of the pyramid earning thousands, even millions. But for now, I've earned his forgiveness and friendship.

As a peace offering, I got a review of his group's last album published in a newspaper, and I've been promoting their gigs and records till now.

And guess what, he now contributes to the paper I am working for! We're practically officemates. So I guess I'm not a fan anymore, I am now a colleague.

Years later, that common friend whom he asked to tell me to "f--- off" said that rock star's girlfriend at that time had found out about my stalking. He said she found it "cute." Kudos to her for that.

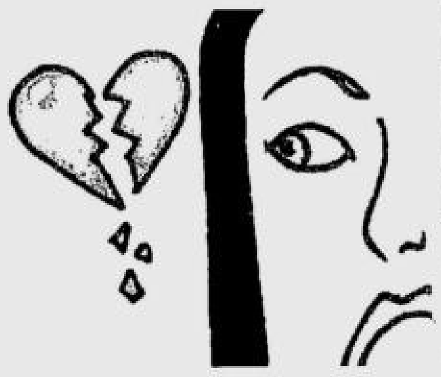
Now, rock star-poet and I are on *beso-beso* terms. We'd attend the same press cons, write for the same publication, and I'd see him in gigs and readings. But I still promote his gigs and scream his songs like four years ago.

This is not to inspire crazy *colegiala* stalkers or aspiring groupies; not everyone could have claim to my, ehem, success story.

This story should show what fangirls could do for their beloved bands. Crazy, obsessive and scary, and sometimes fun, they'd do anything and everything for their idols to ridiculous limits.

E-mail the author at ex.groupie @gmail.com

Cheated, defeated, defiant



By Dona Mabanto
2bU! Contributor

I NEVER EVER THOUGHT I WOULD BE cheated. He was my first boyfriend, and everything seemed magical. He was always there to cheer me up when school became too difficult, to bring me home every day and to surprise me with roses for no reason at all.

I was on such good terms with his family that sometimes his mom sent over *polvoron* for me, but not for him. He made an effort to get close to my dormmates, and, in time, I treated his buddies as my friends, too.

I should have known that there was something wrong from the way he would proudly tell me that I was his 24th girlfriend, and how he once juggled two girlfriends at a time. I found his stories amusing, especially since he would always add that he hoped that I would be his last.

He frequently demanded to know where I was. Sometimes, when I was out with my friends, he would drop by unannounced, and check out the guys in our group. If I had to go to a party or even to a meeting for a school organization, he would pick a fight, so I would end up staying home. I was unhappy with our frequent bickering, so I tried to break up with him several times. He would always get mad. In the end, I would agree to stay with him, if only to avoid his outbursts in public.

I remember one time when a guy friend warned me that my boyfriend was seeing another girl. I asked my boyfriend about it. He confronted my guy friend and angrily denied it. He even threatened to come back with his fraternity brothers and beat up anyone else who would spread the rumor.

Shortly after we celebrated our second anniversary, I asked him if we could spend my birthday together. I had spent the whole summer in an internship, and I felt that we needed to spend time catching up. He replied that he had a meeting for the student council the next day. I was disappointed, but I let it go at that.

Caught

I couldn't sleep that night though. Early the next morning, I called up a friend who was also in the student council. I learned there was no such meeting. I immediately called up my boyfriend.

Tearfully, he narrated that during the summer, a common friend had made a pass at him, which he said he resisted. He did not tell me about the incident because he said he was ashamed of it. Sadly, he said, "It's not you, it's me."

I broke up with him that day, which was my birthday. I was a bit surprised, though, that he agreed to break up this time. We agreed to remain friends, and for the next few weeks, he would even ask me if I was already dating again.

One day, a month after we broke up, I received an anonymous text message telling me to probe further on what my boyfriend had really done during the summer I was away. I confronted his friends. One by one, the stories tumbled out. It turned out my guy friend was not lying, because there really was a girl who would go to his apartment at night.

I also learned that during our sixth month together, when I was out of the country, he was seeing a girl from his organization. And for the summer of my internship, he was visiting the girl, who would soon be spotted holding hands with him a month after our breakup.

The worst part was, I knew all these girls. My boyfriend had introduced me to all of them. One of them went with us to Baguio for a summer outing. The other girls were people from my college.

I asked his friends why they didn't tell me sooner. They replied that they didn't want to meddle. I was furious at myself for being so gullible. But I felt more betrayed because my friends had allowed me to be fooled, not just once, not just twice, but many times.

Most of all, I was angry with my boyfriend for wasting two years of my life. I thought of all the new friends I could have made and of all the places I could have gone to were it not for my boyfriend's jealous outbursts. I cried for days.

One day I just looked in the mirror. I looked horrible. I berated myself: "Why am I crying over someone who is not even crying for me? No guy is worth being ugly for."

From that moment on, I have never looked back. I started spending time with all the friends that my boyfriend had forbidden me to see. I joined new organizations and met new people.

When I look back, that one year after we broke up, my last year in college, was one of the happiest and most carefree times in my life.

Forgiveness

Five years after we broke up, strangers still come up to me and tell me of yet another girl that my boyfriend had cheated. I would later learn that the girls he would introduce to me as his classmates or friends were actually girls he was flirting with. When the girl would ask why we still acted sweet, he would tell them we had already broken up, but I was, supposedly, still in a state of denial.

Some people have asked me if I have forgiven him. I have tried, but it is hard to forgive someone when that person isn't even sorry. To this day, he denies that he ever cheated on me.

That is why I cannot think of him without feeling anger. I know that time heals all wounds. But in the meantime, I can only hope that someday I will find it in my heart to forgive, even if it is not being asked for at all.

I'm in a new relationship now, but from time to time, I still get attacks of paranoia whenever I remember how I was so flagrantly cheated on. On one crazy day, I even thought of asking my current boyfriend to sign an oath of loyalty or post a bond in case he cheats.

But it would be naive of me to believe that I can guarantee that I will never be cheated on again. People are not perfect. Sometimes, even the most well-meaning person can make mistakes.

I guess the only way for me to enjoy relationships again would be to let go, trust completely, and just try to be the best girlfriend that I can be. And if one day I find myself holding the bag again, at least I know that what guys always say is really true: "It's not you, it's me."

What will be, will be

ILLUSTRATION: ALBERT G. RODRIGUEZ

Despite the accident that paralyzed half of my face, I'm content with whatever that I have right now

By Jessie Barcelona, as told to Gmeleen Faye B. Tomboc
2bu! Correspondent

I WORK AS A MISSIONARY FOR THE Couples for Christ (CFC) Global Mission Foundation. I was all set to work in India as a missionary for one year. While waiting for my visa to be processed, I started working on a project that would immerse the youth in areas that had been greatly devastated by floods, like Quezon. Our aim was to eventually start Gawad Kalinga in those areas. (GK is a multi-sectoral movement spearheaded by CFC which aims to transform slums into peaceful and productive communities).

Last year, Candy Subang, a fellow missionary, and I thought of going to Mindoro to personally inspect and prepare for an immersion slated the following month.

It seemed like the world was telling us not to go to Mindoro. On our way to the Batangas pier, we had to transfer buses since the first bus we rode broke down. When we arrived at the pier, the boat to Mindoro was already full. The next trip was also full. We had to wait for two hours before we could catch a boat ride to the island.

When the boat finally docked at Calapan, a fellow missionary was on hand to meet us. Candy and I wanted to visit the GK site in Bulalacao, Oriental Mindoro. But there was no vehicle available to take us there. We decided to stay overnight in the town of Roxas, and from there, leave early the next morning to go to Bulalacao. The next morning, there was another hitch in the plans. The Wrangler jeep which we were supposed to use arrived 30 minutes late.

In the jeep were two other YFC (Youth for Christ, the youth arm of CFC) members, and a full-time CFC worker. We had been traveling for an hour when the accident happened. I can't really remember exactly how it happened, but they say one of the jeep's tires burst, causing the jeep to become unstable. A person who lived in the area saw two sacks thrown off the jeep when the vehicle started swaying.

The two sacks turned out to be Candy and me. I was told I was unconscious when I was lifted from the ground. Candy had blood all over her. Our companions, however, suffered only minor injuries.

A tricyle arrived shortly. We had to be transported to a hospital in Calapan, which by that time was four hours away. It became clear that, due to the extent of our injuries, we had to be treated at a hospital in Manila.

Leaders from GK and YFC contacted everyone they knew who could provide a helicopter to bring us back to Manila. Finally, a chopper arrived and airlifted us to UST Hospital.

On the light side, it was my very first helicopter ride, but too bad I was unconscious. It was also my very first time to be admitted to any hospital for anything, as I had always been a healthy person.

Four days

I regained consciousness after four days. But I don't really remember what happened in the next three weeks. I would be told later on that I was in a coma for a little over a week. The few times I was conscious, my parents said I would open my mouth, but I couldn't say anything. My siblings were really scared; they thought I had lost my ability to speak.

My parents also told me that when I was finally able to talk to them, I said I saw the grandmother of Vania Padilla, one of my fellow missionaries, at the foot of my bed. Vania's grandmother asked me how I was. It was really weird because, first, I had never even met her grandmother, and second, her grandmother was already dead when the accident happened.

I guess you could say that was a near-death experience, though I couldn't remember if I saw light at the end of the tunnel or anything like that.

Fortunately, I didn't have to undergo any operations. I had no blood clots in my brain, but parts of it were badly bruised. As for Candy, her face had to be operated on five times to repair her jaw and her cheekbones.

One week before I was discharged from the hospital, I started therapy. The right side of my face was paralyzed. When I spoke, only the left side of my mouth moved. My left eye was badly bruised. I couldn't even open it. My arms and legs were also very weak.

After about two or three months, I could open my eyes again by about 20 percent. I was discharged after a total of four weeks in the hospital. To this day, I need to see five kinds of doctors. I have a neurologist, a rehabilitation doctor, an EENT specialist, a pulmonary doctor and an optometrist.

Now I can move the right side of my face slightly, but I still need therapy to make it fully functional. To restore my other muscles to their original strength, I do weights, run on a treadmill and do rock climbing. You can say that it's like going to the gym.

WHAT/ C4

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Fighting the queer fight

By Doni Santos,
as told to Danicar Mariano
2bU! Correspondent

Gay rights now!
ALBERT G. RODRIGUEZ

Given my years of dating girls, who would have thought I'd end up a gay activist?

WHEN I BEGAN MY TREK toward loving a fellow man, I didn't know I would come this far. I thought hooking up with another guy was just a phase, something I would tell my grandchildren when I was older.

But it's a decision that I have since then resolved to fight for.

At first, I was like any normal guy. I was your typical boy-next-door. Some would even call me handsome—charming, definitely. With this gentlemanly, can't-hurt-a-fly air about me, I could smooth-talk my way into getting a lot of girls. I was a player. I would even bring women home for sleep-overs in our house, and my parents didn't mind. My dad was proud of the fact that I was a playboy.

My girlfriend and I would walk past the street and friends would tell us what a sweet, good-looking couple we were. I opened doors and pulled out chairs for her. This, however, just masked the fact that I was a chauvinist pig who thought women were weak and needed to be taken care of.

Contrary to what most people believe about gay men, I enjoyed sex with women. The relationships I had with my girlfriends were real.

But in the end, I chose to live with my gay identity.

Self-revelation

My journey to becoming a gay rights activist began with my journey toward self-revelation. It was simultaneously a psychological, emotional, social, as well as spiritual journey. Oddly enough, the beginning of this journey could be traced to when I was in the Obando festival, praying my way into getting a new girlfriend.

At that time, "Lord, give me love" was my battle cry. I hadn't had a girlfriend for five months and I decided to take drastic measures. I decided to dance for it. Obando was not just a festival where you could ask for a child, it was also where women and men asked for prosperity, spouses and love.

True enough, the Lord in his infinite wisdom and sense of humor answered me, but not in the way I had hoped. I met my guy classmate from high school in the festival and we decided to exchange numbers and watch a movie together.

We continued going out on dates without me realizing they were dates. We talked on the phone every day. It went on like this for quite a while, until one day when he got drunk and confessed that he liked me, and asked whether I would like to go steady with him. I was aghast.

"I was not raised to be like this. I couldn't be gay!" I thought to myself. "My idea of a family is a mother, a father, a girl and a boy, a *yaya*, and a dog! This wasn't in any of my plans."

But having read up on gay issues before, specifically "Ladlad," the gay literature of Danton Remoto, I decided I shouldn't react in panic. The enlightened and mature reaction would be not to freak out. I decided to go on with our relationship as friends.

Sure enough, however, I found myself falling for him. But even though something was already happening between us, I still didn't consider myself gay. The struggle and the denial was just so thick, it took me a while before I could accept it. Still, accepting who I was was just the first of many battles.

While my dad would be very proud before to see me bring home a girl, now my parents cried whenever I brought home a boy. They would confront me and tell me, "*Bakit ka ganyan? Hindi* normal *yan!*"

Unlike in my heterosexual relationships, my boyfriend and I had to face our issues alone. We fought a lot because we only saw each other once a month. He always had family affairs which he, of course, couldn't take me to. We would meet people in malls and it would crush my heart to hear him introduce me as his cousin. My family and friends, on the other hand, saw him only as my best friend. I had to contend with the invisibility and scorn brought on by this new relationship.

Support group

To cope with the mounting pressure, I began looking for a support group. I was so desperate for a community that I even mistakenly joined Lesbian Advocates Philippines. I began hanging around the UP campus with my female friends, hoping that UP Babaylan would see me and ask me to join them. Back then, it was the only gay group I knew. I wanted to talk to others in order for me to understand what I was going through. I wanted to ask advice regarding the issues we were facing from people who had more experience.

I found that although there were a lot of gay e-groups and chatrooms you could check out, they were mainly hook-up or dating spaces, which wasn't really my concern at that time. I wanted to have a community, a comfort zone where I could be free to talk about my relationship openly, to ask advice from older and wiser gays on how they came out to their parents, how they dealt with the pressure of living in the closet, how they resolved issues when they fought with their boyfriends.

I started corresponding with gay groups and organizers. It was here that I met my hero, Danton Remoto, whom I had wanted to meet for so long. We started corresponding by e-mail and I was delighted to discover that he was very warm, witty and down-to-earth. We became friends, and it led me to think: "*Kung kaya nina* Danton [*na makipaglaban*], *bakit tayo hindi?*"

So I decided to start a gay organization in our campus to address the needs of gay students in our Catholic university. I gave out flyers and put up posters all around school for anyone who would be interested. While some posters ended up with anti-gay graffiti on them, the response was positive. About 70 faculty, alumni and students signed up. It became an online discussion group, but it still wasn't the kind of gay group I had in mind.

Pride event

In 2003, I attended my first pride event, organized by the local gay group, The Library Foundation. It was a bowling tournament called Ms Bowling Universe. I didn't know anybody there. I must've looked like a lost lamb, because I was the only young person among generally older people. Nonetheless, I had a blast, because it was not the grim and determined activist event I was expecting. In fact, it was more like a party. Some people even came wearing butterfly costumes!

That same year, Danton came back to Manila from his studies abroad and announced that he was forming a political party for LGBT rights. I volunteered to join. Soon after, Ang Ladlad (then known as Ang Lunduyan) was formed.

My first major task was to prepare banners and paraphernalia for that year's pride march. Parts of the parade got televised, and my sister texted me to say my parents had seen the footage. My parents had expressed to her their fears that I would be ridiculed for being gay. My sister, bless her, told them: "*Kaya nga sumasali si kuya sa mga* gay orgs *tulad ng* Ang Ladlad *e, para wala nang makakapagsabi na katawa-tawa yung mga bakla. Yun ang pinaglalaban nila.*"

And the clincher: "Wouldn't it be more shameful that everyone around him has accepted him for what he is except you guys?"

My boyfriend Lance is also an activist, and our work for the community has helped us a lot to grow together as a gay couple. It's very convenient to have your partner in the same field since we can go together to the pride events. Plus, he gives me the freedom, support and understanding that I need in my work.

Our work for Ang Ladlad has borne fruit with our award-winning website. Lance and I also go to our radio hostings together.

My job as ad hoc vice president for Ang Ladlad involve recruiting members for the youth sector and letting them know that such a political party exists for them. I attend gender and human rights conferences in behalf of the group. I also network with friends, gay and straight alike, to help support the anti-discrimination campaign in Congress.

Basically, I do anything and everything to help the party, from making the sandwiches for our meetings to distributing flyers and leaflets to posting on gay e-groups about the party so that people will know we are fighting for our rights.

Yep, it's certainly a long way from the confused and rattled school boy phase that I thought being gay was. And while I see that there's still a long way ahead for me, there's no stopping me now.

E-mail the author angladlad@yahoogroups.com

What will be, will be

From page C3

The accident has also affected my sense of taste. I can't really taste anything unless it's extremely spicy or sweet. Sometimes, when I can't taste my food, I just try to remember what it used to taste like.

Loving community

Looking back, I feel so blessed that I belong to a very loving community. The people in CFC took care, not just of me, but of my family as well. This accident also brought my family together once again. Some of my siblings are already married, while some are still studying, and before my accident, we used to gather only for Christmas.

I'm also thankful that while watching over me, my fellow missionaries and members of my family became friends.

Strangely, I never asked why the accident had to happen. In fact, I see the accident as God's way of answering my prayers. While I was preparing myself for the mission to India, I always prayed to have a humble heart like Jesus. Before the accident, it was easy for me, and I guess for all of us, to get caught up with things because we think there's too much to do and too little time.

Now I've learned to be more humble, and I've learned to just trust in God. We don't even own our lives. We're only here for just a short while, and we have to give thanks to the One who gave us that life. We have to make the most of our short sojourn in this world. We take for granted the things that we own, but we should be content with what we have.

Take time to enjoy, take time to love, take time to laugh, take time to cry. You shouldn't wait for an accident or a death to happen before you realize that life is beautiful. From whatever angle you look at it, we're all blessed. Don't think that something is missing in your life. That something is already in your life and may be staring at you in the face. It's just that maybe we're expecting it to be packaged in a different way.

Before the accident, I wasn't really the type who cared about my looks. Now, when I catch myself in the mirror, I sometimes think "just a little more therapy and I'll be able to make a full smile, not just a half smile."

Strangely though, I'm content with whatever that I have right now. I have joyful and great expectations for that beautiful plan God has for me ahead, without expecting too much. What will be, will be.

The long and grinding road to Law

By Gmeleen Faye B. Tomboc
2bU! Correspondent

AS FAR BACK AS I COULD remember, I had always wanted to be a lawyer. Way before "Ally McBeal" and the impeachment trial had caught everyone's fancy, I was already dreaming of delivering passionate pleas on behalf of some wrongfully accused client.

In high school, we visited a law school, and I remember being mesmerized by the building's grand pillars and vast classrooms. I glanced down at the armchair I was sitting on and noticed that someone had scrawled a giant letter "G," which happened to be the first letter of my name. I stared at it long and hard, and made a fervent vow that someday, I'd sit on that chair again.

Soon after graduation, I got accepted into law school. I was so excited that one month before the start of classes, I was already thinking of what to wear on the first day, à la "Legally Blonde." Law school, I thought, would be the time of my life.

Nothing could be farther from the truth. The horror stories about having to read mountains of cases and books turned out to be true. So were the teachers who shouted at you for the slightest mistake during recitation and then sent you out of the room, the way kids were sent out of kindergarten class. My readings for a month were the equivalent of everything I had ever read in my life since first grade.

The first few weeks were still bearable. While I was used to sleeping 10 hours a day in my college years, I got used to sleeping just four hours, thanks to cups of coffee. I found myself going straight home after class and studying for six hours straight, in contrast to my college days when I went out every day.

I began turning down invitations for Friday and Saturday night gimmicks. I didn't think much when I started receiving just two text messages a day, both of them from my parents. For a moment, I actually thought I had already adjusted.

Reality soon set in. One day, maybe because of panic, I was unable to answer the professor's question correctly. I got a failing mark for the first time in my life.

All that lack of sleep had caught up with me. I found myself dozing through three alarm clocks. I could no longer be kept awake past 10 p.m. even with two cups of coffee and a bottle of Red Bull. I began lagging behind in my readings. When I ran into a friend from college, he didn't recognize me at first. With my unkempt hair, large eye bags and haggard appearance, I was a far cry from the vain, vivacious person that I once was.

Some of my colleagues fared worse, though. Halfway through the semester, about 10 percent of the class dropped out. When the grades for the first semester came in, I was devastated. They were the lowest I had ever got in my life.

Depression soon set in. There were mornings when I would just lie in bed, wondering whether I should have gone to law school in the first place. My self-confidence was at an all-time low. I started wondering if I really deserved the grades I got in college, or if I had just smiled my way through.

I sought the advice of upperclassmen. One of them admonished me, "Instead of lying around and thinking about what to do with your life, use that time to study. Not only will you forget your angst, but your grades will also improve. Save your contemplation for the summer."

Attitude shift

I took my friend's advice to heart. From then on, I just studied and studied. It came to a point where I stopped caring about my grades and started to actually appreciate the nuances of the law. If I was going to get a low grade, so be it, as long as I knew in my heart that I understood the subject.

Needless to say, there were still complicated topics and intimidating teachers. When struggling with a particularly nerve-racking subject, I would think of the thousands of law students before me who had taken and passed that subject, and tell myself that if all of them could make it, so could I.

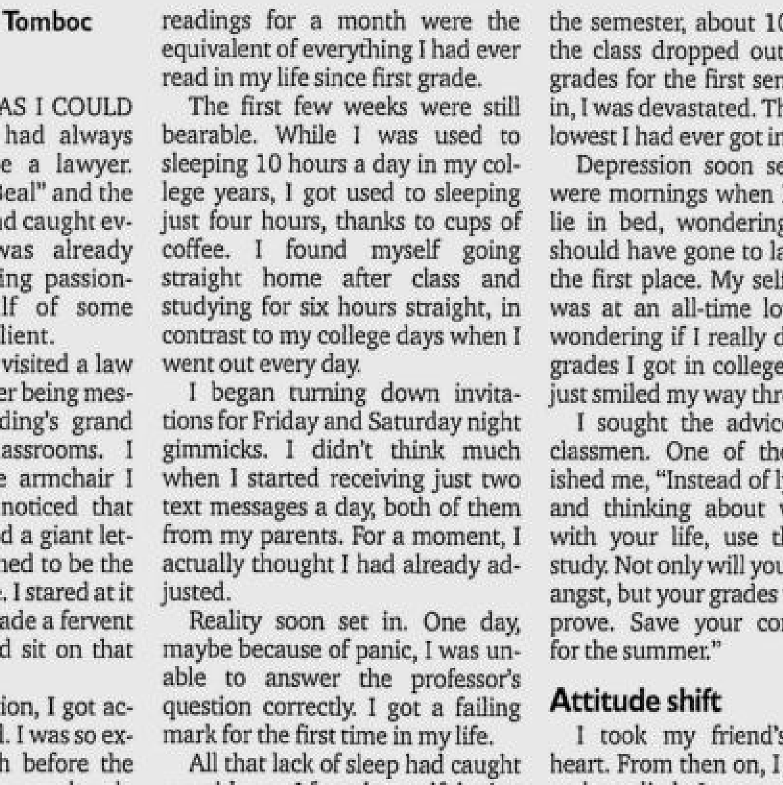
And when I couldn't take it anymore, I would talk to my blockmates, and together we would try to study. Of course, there were times when all of us would be equally stumped, but it helped knowing that we were all on the same boat.

The years passed. Slowly, I learned how to budget my time. I started participating in extra-curricular activities, and meeting up again with old friends. My classmates became dear friends. Sometimes, I would actually be excited to go to school, not so much for the classes, but for the chance to exchange gossip or trade jokes over lunch at the school cafeteria.

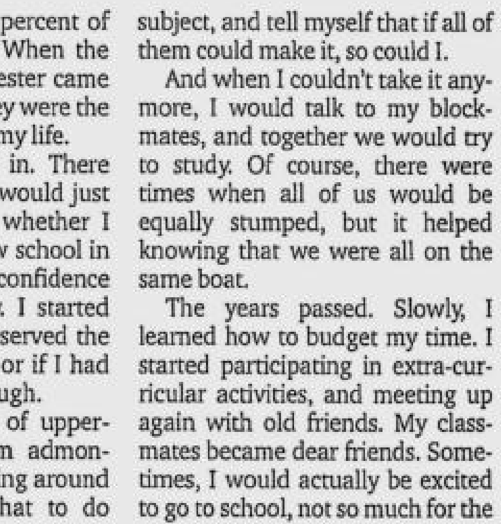
Before long, it was time to graduate. Wearing that toga was one of the proudest moments in my life, because I knew that I had really worked hard for it. Today, when I go back to school and pass through its grand pillars and vast classrooms, I am still mesmerized, the way I once was when I first visited this place.

But I am also filled with gratitude—to the Lord, to my family and to my friends—for supporting me no end. I may not have found that armchair where I first saw that giant letter "G" 10 years ago, but I've found things which are more valuable—lessons in perseverance, humility, friendship and faith.

Regal party experience



FROM TRIP Hop to Deep House to Breakbeats, DJ Stewart's expert spinning keeps the party grooving.



UNIQUE art that's as fluid as the music, that's what live painter Jean-Pierre Brown creates during parties.

THE COSMOPOLITAN NEW YORK PARTY vibe comes to Manila on Aug. 5 at Embassy, The Fort, thanks to Chivas Regal.

Party at Embassy the way they do at the trendsetting clubs in New York, Paris, Tokyo and Milan—with a mix of music, dance and unconventional art. Internationally acclaimed DJ Stewart, known for his diverse musical styles, from Trip Hop to Deep House to Breakbeats, is the spinmeister. DJ Stewart has played the trendiest clubs around the world, including Bakaos, Shamballa Lounge, Louis XIV, Bed Supper Club, Faith Club and Café Democ. He has played in almost every key city in the US and around the world, from London, Glasgow, Dublin and Amsterdam to Frankfurt, Munich, Berlin and Paris. Manila will groove to his funky Nu-Skool Breakbeat sound at the Chivas party.

Accompanying DJ Stewart is VJ DSK. His specialty is seamlessly blending together graphic design and motion graphics, live! His digital ensembles sew together scenes from stock films and pop videos with scenes from the live party. You might even catch yourself dancing on screen! His techno-visual masterpieces have been seen in La Fabrique in Shibuya, Shanghai, Hong Kong and Korea.

Finally, rounding out the party trio is live painter Jean-Pierre Brown. He abandons all artistic restraint and paints as the music moves him. His visual show combines eclectic moves with brush strokes, producing irreverent art merged with traditional painting techniques. Trained at the Nova Scotia College of Art and Design, where he obtained his master's degree, Brown has had exhibits of his works in the Johnson & Johnson Corporate Art Gallery, The Artist's Network Gallery, and at Phantom Limb.

Don't miss the Chivas New York Party on Aug. 5, at Embassy! Live life to the fullest with the smooth, rich taste of Chivas Regal!

WOMEN JUST WANNA HAVE FUN

There's really more to running a bar than loving the nightlife and wanting very much to boogie.

If you ask successful restaurant-and-bar maven Christine San Diego, there is a lot more to it than that. As the general manager of nightspots such as Absinth – which is just going strong as a hangout in Greenbelt – she doesn't hesitate to list down all of her responsibilities from menu planning, overall financial analysis plus accounting, P.R./marketing and restaurant administration. All in all, Christine says it's about "making sure that the guests are happy and the service excellent. Making sure that the overall appearance of the place is good." Despite being the boss, Christine doesn't think twice about getting behind the bar to tend to her patrons or even "waitering" when she's understaffed.

Before Absinth, this single mother put up Bistro 110. "I was actually more interested in the restaurant business," says Christine, "when we opened Bistro 110 that was what its main concept was but because we wanted to maximize our profits we decided to turn it into a bar in the evenings. That was what got me interested." Still up and running on Carlos Palanca St. in Makati, Bistro 110 gave Christine the idea of putting up Flute Wine Bar in Salcedo Village – a pioneering establishment in that area. Aside from Absinth, she currently also manages Juice Bar in Boracay. As if that weren't enough, she also has a real estate company.

Ironically, Christine wasn't always into the nightlife. She waited until she was in the ripe old age of 22 before she took her first drink on a night out with her cousins. "It was a good experience", she says. "All our night outs were always fun," recalls Christine.

Characteristically, Christine works to make sure that that her customers get nothing less than that same experience every time.

"I like meeting people and making them happy through my food, drinks and music," answers Christine when asked about what gets her excited about what she does. "I would never work for anything I didn't like unless it is necessary. The work I do is very satisfying and fulfilling."

She admits though that, "it is hard to run a business that everyone thinks has a low mortality rate." According to her, "competition is quite tough but I'm quite lucky to still be in this for 8 years."

During vacations, Christine enjoys diving, which very much is in keeping with her adventurous side. It's during these times – floating in a different environment – that allows her to detach and reflect.

When asked if she worries that her hectic schedule will take its toll, Christine shrugs her shoulders and says, "sometimes." She adds, "I am not getting any younger. This life is sometimes too fast paced for me."

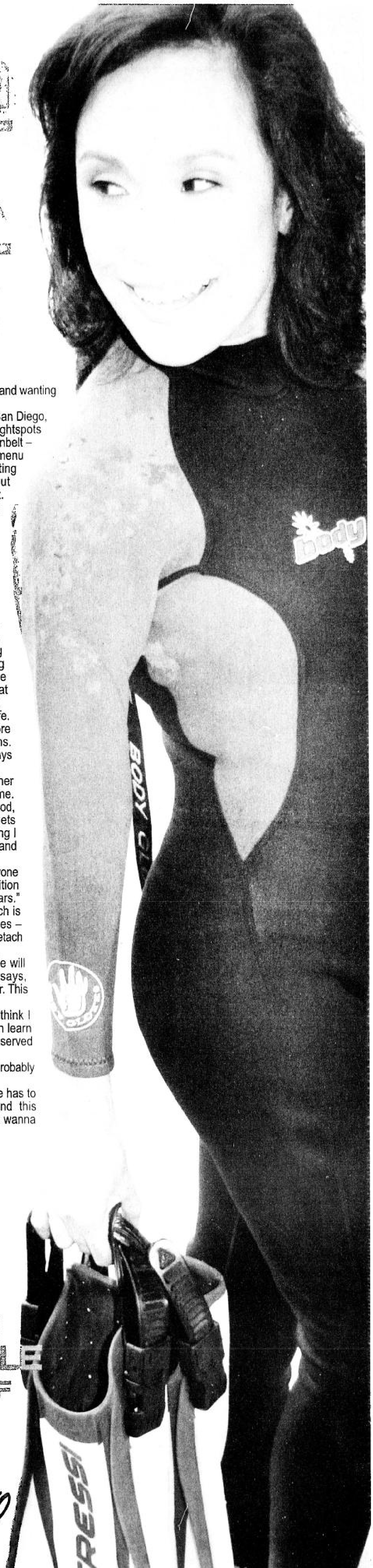
But Christine isn't slowing down anytime soon. "I think I have a lot more to offer in this business. People can learn a lot from me."In fact, she's not resting on her well-deserved laurels.

"I am thinking of opening more restaurants, bars and probably a club, not just in Makati."

"Passion and competence." That's her secret. "One has to love to work and enjoy at the same time," she explains and this what keeps her going. After all, women – like girls - just wanna have fun.

INSIDE THE DAY 2 NITE LIFESTYLE OF

Christine San Diego



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JAYPAX del Rosario (right)

What makes you a rock star?

ARE YOU LIVING THE ROCK N' ROLL LIFE?

INQUIRER 2bu! is letting you in on the "Rockstar SuperNova" craze! Unleash your inner rock star to win exclusive premium items from Star World's top-rating reality TV show. Keep sending us your most recent hi-resolution photos at a rockin' gig, and tell us in five sentences or less, what makes your life rock? All entries must be e-mailed to rockstar_2bu@yahoo.com—just don't forget to include all the juicy details (your full name, date, place, gig/band).

Each week, up to three rocked out readers will win cool prizes from "Rock Star: Supernova" and have their winning entries published in upcoming 2bU! issues. So go ahead and rock our world, you know you want to!

"Rock Star: Supernova" airs live, exclusively on Star World every Wednesdays (8:30 a.m.) and Thursdays (8 a.m.), with primetime broadcasts at 8 p.m. on the same day.

Readers rock! Here are last week's winners who give us reasons why they think they rock!

Jaypax del Rosario: As a member of the music ministry of San Beda's Peace Retreat Movement, we used music to spice up our retreats and praise Jesus who we call our Superfriend. That's me on the right with my mentors *Kuya* Ian Abia and Dennis Montales.

Emmans Nana: "I have a cool family who loves me so much. I'm also happy to be surrounded by cool friends who are so much fun to be with. When we're together, we really rock!"

Aika Rivera: My life rocks because I've gotten to meet my rock idol Bamboo! I am such a fan of his so I go to all his concerts!

Winners can claim their prizes by calling Cindy Corrales of Stratworks at 7513805 or 06.

EMMANS Nana

AIKA Rivera

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ENTERTAINMENT

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Rufa Mae sure Erik's not gay

By Nini Valera

RUFA MAE QUINTO ADMITS she is still hurting from her breakup with basketball player Rudy Hatfield even if she has found a new love in singer Erik Santos.

Rufa Mae recently told INQUIRER Entertainment that it was hard to forget what she had with Hatfield, whom she lived with for seven years.

Hatfield went back to the US last year to become a fireman in New York City. The actress said he asked her to go with him.

"What would I do there?" she said. "My life and my work are here."

Rufa Mae said she told Hatfield she would "make a decision" when she turns 30—which is three years from now.

Tearful call

"It looked like he couldn't wait," she said. "It was his choice to leave. He no longer had problems with immigration and could stay here indefinitely (Hatfield's mother is a Filipina)."

Rufa Mae last spoke to Hatfield in May.

"I was crying," she recounted. "I just cried and cried. He said not to call if I would just cry. When I called him again [after that], he didn't pick up anymore."

The actress decided it was time to move on, finding solace in work and, lately, in the company of Erik Santos.

"I always had a crush on Erik," Rufa Mae confided. "When we worked on a concert together last month, I told him so, but I left it at that."

The rumors that Erik was gay never bothered her, Rufa Mae said. "Now I *know* he isn't gay."

First kiss

The two became acquainted during rehearsals for a concert.

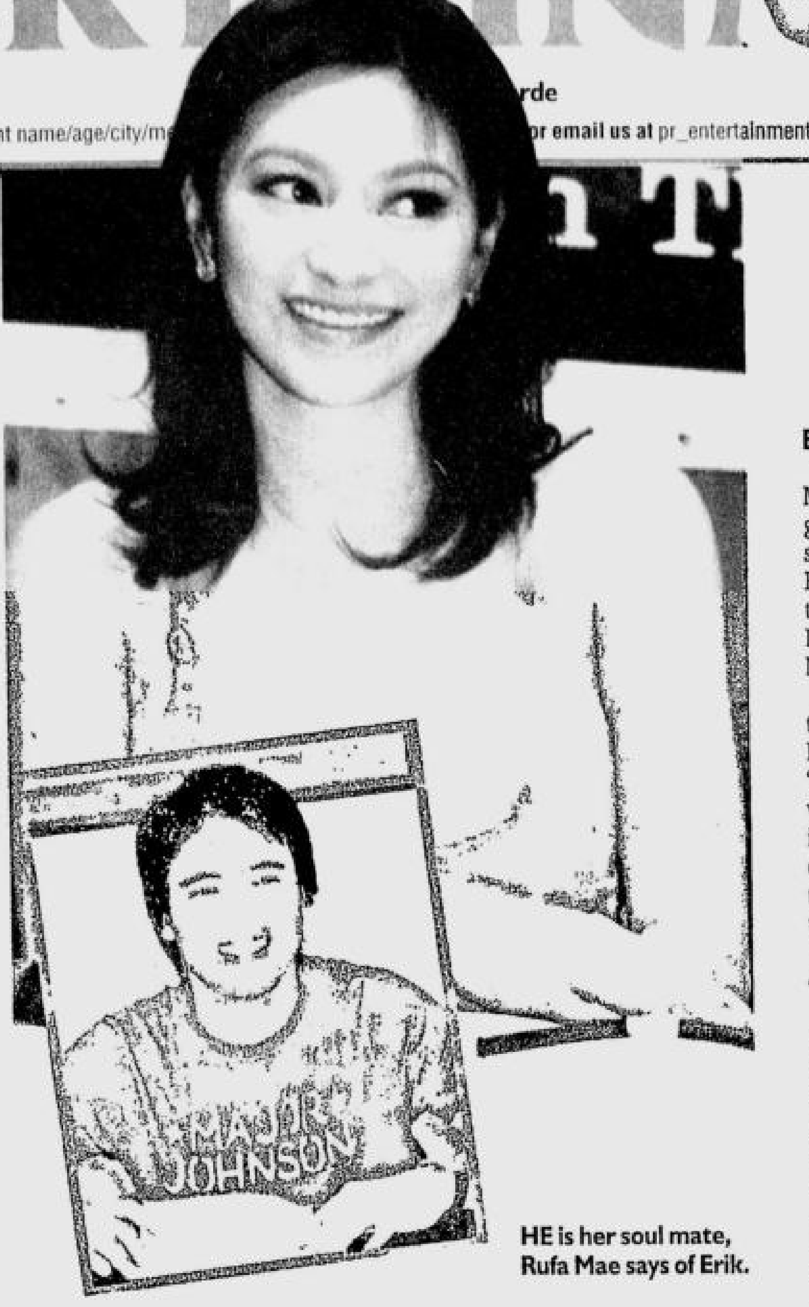
"During the concert, he kissed me on the lips," Rufa Mae recalled. "We started going out afterwards. Finally, we asked our manager, Boy Abunda, to dinner. We told him about us and sought his advice. People had started seeing us together. Since we had the same manager, we were afraid that people might think it was a gimmick. Erik and I wanted to come out clean."

Abunda's advice was exactly that—come out clean. On his daily show "Homeboy" last month, the talent manager broke the news about the lovebirds.

Two weeks later, it was Erik's turn to own up on "The Buzz."

Oh, my

Rufa Mae hardly has time to spend with Erik these days. She is a mainstay on three GMA 7 shows and keeps a killer schedule.



HE is her soul mate, Rufa Mae says of Erik.

While she was shooting for the movie "Oh, My Ghost," Erik visited twice.

"But only to say hi," said Rufa Mae. "We can see each other only one day in a week."

She described Erik as "gentle and kind." He is three years her junior. He also struck her as his grandmother's baby.

"But I've turned the tables on him," she said. "I want him to take care of me."

If she has a soul mate, it would be Erik, Rufa Mae insisted.

"We share the same concerns about our families," she said. She was amazed that he managed to build a house for his family after only a few years in the business, she added.

"I could relate to that," Rufa Mae said. Rudy (Hatfield) is not like that."

SM apologizes to movie-TV board

By Bayani San Diego Jr.

MALL GIANT SM HAS APOLOGIZED to the Movie and Television Review and Classification Board (MTRCB), as a result of the "suspension" case against Imax Theater located at the Mall of Asia in Pasay City.

In its memo dated June 22, the board admonished the Imax theater for: 1) showing "Nascar 3D" and "Everest" without permits and 2) "limiting the number of MTRCB deputies" who could watch at the theater for free, as part of their monitoring duties.

Arrangement

The board also took exception to a statement allegedly uttered by SM manager Janet Deriada, which had implied "a special arrangement" between MTRCB Chair Ma. Consoliza "Marissa" Laguardia and Ric D. Camaligan, SM Leisure Group's vice president for Operations.

SM obtained from a Pasay City Regional Trial Court on June 29 a temporary retraining order against the suspension.

After a series of meetings, the parties decided to resolve the issue, starting with the apology.

In a July 13 letter addressed to Laguardia, Camaligan "sincerely apologized... in behalf of our company for... [Deriada's] careless and inconsiderate statement."

Camaligan stressed that "SM never had a special arrangement with the board."

Tri-media

Laguardia pointed out that after SM issues a tri-media apology, both parties will file a motion to withdraw the RTC case and the suspension order will be lifted.

Camaligan reiterated that SM would "continue to abide by the board's implementing rules and regulations."

Laguardia told INQUIRER Entertainment: "I appreciate SM's apology. It not only shows humility; it also proves that it recognizes MTRCB authority over its theaters."

Meanwhile, the MTRCB called the attention of ABS-CBN for the documentary show "The Correspondents," because of the June 26 episode titled "Ang Pinoy Rasta" which showed a father-and-son smoking marijuana.

Response

Laguardia said the network was set to submit its position paper within the week, which marks the end of the 15-day grace period.

This was confirmed by Current Affairs head Luchi Cruz-Valdez, who told INQUIRER that the network plans to submit its response to the board adjudication hearing today.

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FROM *STAR WARS* JEDI MENTOR TO *STORMBREAKER*'s SUPER-SPY UNCLE

EWAN MCGREGOR:
Perfect Mentor to the young and famous.

The sexiest man to ever wield a lightsaber, **Ewan McGregor** rocketed to prominence over an impressively short period of time, thanks to a brilliant turn of being hired to play Obi-Wan Kenobi, mentor to young Anakin Skywalker in the Star Wars Trilogy. Now, the Brit heartthrob plays mentor again to **Alex Rider**, the youngest MI6 agent in **STORMBREAKER**, a film based on the bestselling spy novel by British author Anthony Horowitz.

As Rider's uncle in the film, did he – forgive us – play 'Yoda' to the young star? "*I sat him down as soon as he arrived on set and said 'Now, listen here!'*" he chuckles. "*No, he's got a very wise head on his shoulders has Alex, he didn't need any advice from me.*"

Instead of seeking out advice on the industry, Alex made a beeline for the man playing his uncle in Stormbreaker for a different kind of guidance.

"*I wanted to talk to Ewan McGregor about motorbikes and he gave me some good tips,*" Alex Pettyfer says sheepishly. "*We didn't talk about acting even once, is that really bad? I've since gone out and got myself a bike so he must've had an affect on me.*"

When asked who is the better student ...Anakin or Alex? McGregor says: "*No comment*".

STORMBREAKER also stars *'Batgirl'* Alicia Silverstone, Bill Nighy (*Davy Jones of 'Pirates of the Caribbean'*), Robbie Coltrane (*Rubeus Hagrid of 'Harry Potter'*) and Andy Serkis of *'The Lord of the Rings'* Trilogy (Gollum). ADVT

Hayden Christensen of 'Star Wars Trilogy'

Alex Pettyfer of STORMBREAKER

ROUNDUP

'Vice' overtakes 'Pirates'

LOS ANGELES— THE "MIAMI VICE" SPEEDBOAT OVERTOOK THE "Pirates of the Caribbean" juggernaut to capture the top spot at the US and Canada weekend box office.

The film, which pairs Colin Farrell and Jamie Foxx as the iconic TV characters Sonny Crockett and Ricardo Tubbs, took in $25.2 million, compared with $20.5 million for "Pirates of the Caribbean: Dead Man's Chest," according to studio estimates.

Estimated ticket sales for Friday through Sunday at US and Canadian theaters, according to Exhibitor Relations, officials trackers:

1) "Miami Vice," $25.2M; 2) "Pirates of the Caribbean: Dead Man's Chest," $20.5M; 3) "John Tucker Must Die," $14M; 4) "Monster House," $11.5M; 5) "The Ant Bully," $8.2M; 6) "Lady in the Water," $7M; 7) "You, Me and Dupree," $7M; 8) "Little Man," $5.1M; 9) "The Devil Wears Prada," $4.8M; 10) "Clerks II," $3.9M. *AP*

Movies on video

THE MANNY PACQUIAO STARRER "LISENSYADONG KAMAO" AND the Golden Leopard award winner "Masahista" are now available on video.

"Lisensyadong Kamao" tells the story of Ambrosio "Bruce" Lerio (Pacquiao), a young *probinsyano* who travels to Manila in search of a better life for his family.

While working as a street vendor, his identity as a suspended boxer is discovered, which leads him to training for fights under internal boxing promoter Fernan Balani (Eddie Garcia) who prepares him for a world title fight.

"Masahista" is about Iliac (Coco Martin), a 20-year-old masseur in a parlor that caters to gays. The movie also stars Jaclyn Jose, Alan Paule and Katherine Luna. It won the Golden Leopard award (video division) at the 58th Locarno International Film Festival in Switzerland.

Stone draws raves

LOS ANGELES—TEN DAYS BEFORE THE BOX-OFFICE DEBUT OF "World Trade Center," critics already are heaping extravagant praise on Oliver Stone's new film about the Sept. 11, 2001 attacks.

The full-length film with Nicolas Cage in the main role tells the true story of two police officers trapped in the rubble of the New York Twin Towers.

"Oliver Stone ... makes a real play with your emotions," said Lew Harris, editor of Movies.com. "He gets the most subtle performance out of Nicolas Cage I've ever seen." *AFP*

MTV Music Awards

SOME OF THE HOTTEST BANDS AND THE CURRENT NATIONAL boxing hero will perform during The MTV Pilipinas Video Music Awards 2006 on Aug. 14.

Boxing champ Manny Pacquiao joins Parokya ni Edgar, Sandwich, Kamikazee, Up dharma Down, Urbandub and Itchyworms—this year's nominees for the MTV awards—for the ceremony and program at the Pagcor Grand Theater in Casino Filipino, Parañaque City.

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The true new Bruce Lee?

HONG KONG—JACKIE CHAN and Jet Li may be modern Hollywood's most sought-after kung fu stars, but lesser known Donnie Yen is perhaps the most credible claimant to the mantle of the legendary Bruce Lee.

Like Lee, Yen, whose new movie "Dragon Tiger Gate" was released here Friday, is an ethnic Chinese American who found fame at a young age in Hong Kong with his high-kicking martial arts skills.

Yen is also similarly rebellious, getting mixed up in street fights and running afoul of the law.

"I wanted to be Bruce Lee because I found someone I could relate to," Yen told AFP ahead of a star-studded Hong Kong premier of "Dragon Tiger Gate." *AFP*

DONNIE YEN

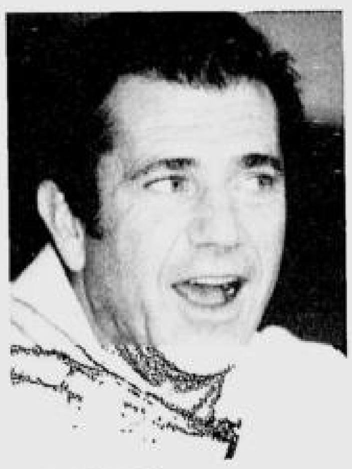
Teaching Colin

HONG KONG—CHINESE ACtress Gong Li said Colin Farrell, her co-star in the movie "Miami Vice," taught her how to drink beer but she introduced him to *mojitos* — the rum, lime and soda water drink served with a sprig of mint, a Hong Kong newspaper reported Sunday. *AP*

Sorry, mate

LOS ANGELES—MEL GIBSON issued a lengthy statement apologizing for saying "despicable" things to deputies when he was arrested for investigation of driving under the influence of alcohol.

"I acted like a person completely out of control when I was arrested and said things that I do not believe to be true and which are despicable," the actor/director said Saturday without elaborating. *AP*



MEL GIBSON

GONG LI REUTERS

And then some

ACTOR LUKE WILSON, ON his latest movie, "My Super Ex-Girlfriend," about a guy who breaks up with a girl who has super-powers (Uma Thurman): "I thought the script was very funny. It's a very relatable story. Everyone's been through a rocky relationship, and ours in the movie is definitely rocky…and then some."

UMA THURMAN and Luke Wilson

Who's the dad?

NEW YORK—COMEDIAN Will Ferrell and his wife, Viveca Paulin, are expecting.

"My wife is pregnant again," Ferrell told Jay Leno on "The Tonight Show" on Thursday.

Asked by Leno if he is indeed the baby's father, Ferrell joked: "I'm not the father. Chuck Norris is." *AP*

INQUIRER
TV GUIDE
Wednesday, August 2, 2006
iDOL ABC mag-iba!
Ang Pinakamagandang Panget sa Balat ng Lupa!
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Channel	2:30PM	3:00PM	3:30PM	4:00PM	4:30PM	5:00PM	5:30PM	6:00PM	6:30PM	7:00PM	7:30PM	8:00PM	8:30PM	9:00PM	9:30PM	10:00PM	10:30PM	11:00PM	11:30PM
ABC 5				Dream Music Videos	PBA				Sentro	PBA					Big News	Fear Factor			
ABS-CBN 2		Kapamilya Cinema			Pasion de Amor	Zenki	Yakitate Japan	Calla Lily	TV Patrol World		Kapamilya Deal Or No Deal	Bituing Walang Ningning		Sa Piling Mo	My Girl	A Love To Kill	Bandila	Probe	Mirada De Mujer
AXN		CSI: NY (Season 2)		Worlds Apart		Ripley's Believe It or Not		Pensacola (Season II)		The Amazing Race 8		30 Seconds To Fame	Samsung Sports World	Maximum Exposure (Season I)		CSI: Crime Scene Investigation (Season 6)		CSI: Miami (Season 3)	
Cartoon Network	Pixie And Dixie	All New Popeye Show	Tom & Jerry Show	Baby Looney Tunes	Winx Club	Xiaolin Showdown	Codename: Kids Next Door	Foster's Home For Imaginary Friends	The Simpsons	Samurai Jack	PokeMon	Dice	Gundam Seed Destiny	The Simpsons	Teen Titans	Justice League	The Batman	X-Men Evolution	Static Shock
Cinema One		Tatlong Labuyo				Nasaan Ang Puso Ko				Hari Ng Selda			Persona	Nag-iisang Bituin (9:15 PM)				Hibla	
Cinemax	Mister Roberts (2:25 PM)				Beyond Betrayal			The Big Chill (6:15 PM)				A Cry In The Dark				Implicated			Friday The 13th Part 4: The Final Chapter
CNN		Business International		World News	World Sport	Larry King Live		Business International	World Sport	World News Asia		World News	World Sport	World News Asia	World News Asia	Your World Today			
Crime/Suspense		Cold Case		Law & Order: Special Victims Unit		Profiler		Forensic Files	I, Detective	Law & Order		Law & Order: Special Victims Unit						Bones	Surface
Disney Channel	Mr. Bean, The Animated Series	Totally Spies	Art Attack/Un-[illegible] Bunny	Sabrina, The Animated Series	Lilo & Stitch	Martin Mystery	Totally Spies	Kim Possible	Mr. Bean, The Animated Series	That's So Raven	Wonderful World Of Disney			American Dragon	Buzz on Maggie	Kim Possible	Totally Spies	Wonderful World Of Disney	
ESPN						X Games 11 - Day2				Pool: Snooker World Pool League '04 Poland		Germany Tonight		Sportscenter Asia	Classic Boxing		Classic Boxing		Sportscenter Asia
ETC		America's Next Top Model 4		Change of Heart	Eliminidate	Blind Date	Fifth Wheel	Seinfeld	Ambush Makeover	The Tyra Banks Show		Veronica Mars 2		Beach Girls		Entertainment Tonight	The Insider	The Tonight Show With Jay Leno	
ETC 2nd Avenue		Starting Over		The Maury Povich Show		The Jerry Springer Show		Dr. Phil		NBC Nightly News	The Inside Edition	The Ellen Show		Wheel Of Fortune	Jeopardy	Cold Turkey		NBC Nightly News	The Inside Edition
EWTN	St. Thomas More: Faithful Statesman	Chaplet Of Mercy/ Angelus	Faith In Motion	Truth In The Heart	Rosary With Mother Angelica	EWTN Gallery	Suffering And The Love Of God	EWTN Catholic Classic	The Church & The Poor: Building Bridges	Mother Angelica Live Classics		Daily Mass		Holy Land Rosary/ Angelus	One In Their Hearts: Holiness Of Priesthood	Parable	Rome Reports	Special Programming	
Fox News		On The Record With Greta Van Susteren		The O'Reilly Factor		Your World With Neil Cavuto		Fox & Friends						Fox News Live					
GMA 7	Agawin Mo Man Ang Lahat	Now and Forever (3:15 PM)	Ang Pagbabago (3:45 PM)		Saiyuki	Dragonball Z	Jewel In The Palace	24 Oras		Captain Barbell (7:10 PM)		Majika		I Luv NY (8:50 PM)	Love Of The Condor Heroes	Nuts Entertainment			Saksi
Hallmark Channel		Strong Medicine (3:15 PM)						McLeod's Daughters		Strong Medicine		Missing I		Judging Amy					Judging Amy (11:45PM)
HBO	Hooper (2:45PM)				Thoughtcrimes			Stone Cold			Elf			Huff 01: Pilot		Huff 02: Assault And Pepper		Caddyshack (10:50PM)	
Hero TV	Yu-Gi-Oh Duel Monsters	Yakitate Japan	Mr. Ajikko	D.I.C.E.	Super Gals	Angelic Layer	Tokyo Underground	Metal Fighter Miku	Beyblade G-Revolution	Yu-Gi-Oh GX	Naruto	Mirmo de Pon	Inuyasha	Yu-Gi-Oh Duel Monsters	Yakitate Japan	Mr. Ajikko	D.I.C.E.	Super Gals	Angelic Layer
IBC 13		EZ Shop				Home Shopping Network	IBC Express Balita	EBC Earth Files		Legacy Of Hero		EBC Earth Files		Travel Philippines	Japan Video Topics Asia	Up Close And Personal	IBC News Tonite		
JackTV	The Daily Show With Jon Stewart	The Late Show David Letterman		Heat		Velocity		X-Men	Street Smarts	Mad TV		That 70s Show	My Name Is Earl	The Late Show David Letterman		The Daily Show With Jon Stewart	Premium Blend	Primetime Glick	Chappelle Show
Lifestyle Network		30 Minute Meals	Wolfgang Puck	Sweet Dreams	Smart Solutions	Sensible Chic	DIY: Crafts	Iron Chef America		My Country, My Kitchen	E! Entertainment Special		Living Space	Martha		Fine Living Special		Intimate Portrait	
MTV Philippines		Homewrecker	Room Raiders		MTV Hits					Get Spotted		TRL		Homewrecker	Room Raiders				
MYX		Rock MYX	My MYX	Mellow MYX	Urban MYX	Take 5	MYXLOG	MYX Firsts	Star MYX	OPM MYX	Pop MYX	MYX Daily Top Ten		MYX Live!		Band Of The Run	My MYX	MYX Backtrax	MYXLOG
National Geographic	Wildlife Diary	National Geographic Specials		Journey Into Amazonia		Planet Wild	Wild Orphans	Top 5 - Volcano		WOW! Deep Jungle: The Beast Within		About Asia		National Geographic Specials		Seconds From Disaster: Russia's Nuclear Sub Nightmare		Inside 911: Osama Rising	
NBN		Teledyaryo Alas-Tres		Teledyaryo Sports Alap.			Diyos Ko, Mahal Mo Ba Sila?	Teledyaryo W/ Rey Langit & Angelique Lazo		Tinig ng Bayan (Live)				Teledyaryo Final Edition				Bantay OCW With Susan K	
Net 25	INC Chronicles	Convergence	Auto Motor Sport	The Planet	Tomorrow Today	Ang Pagbubunyag		News Beat (Live)		Openline (Live)	Kapatid Sa Hanapbuhay	INC Chronicles E	INC Chronicles F	Ang Tamang Daan		World Report	Gabay Sa Kalusugan	DWTV Journal News	The Planet
Nickelodeon	Chalkzone	Hey Arnold!	SpongeBob SquarePants	Rocket Power	Four Eyes	SpongeBob SquarePants/ Right On Top	The Adventures of Jimmy Neutron/ My Life As A Teenage Robot	Nick Kicks/ All Grown Up		The Fairly Odd Parents	Drake & Josh	Unfabulous	Romeo	Naturally Sadie	SpongeBob SquarePants	As Told By Ginger	The Fairly Odd Parents	My Dad The Rock Star	
PBO			Kuwatog				Pangarap Lang, Ang Pag-ibig				Tatlo Silang Tatay Ko				Bertud Ng Putik				Tagos Ng Dugo
Qtv	Goodluck	Shaman King	Outlaw Star	Galaxy Angel	MMS (My Music Station)		Moms		Phoenix	Irene	Fireworks	Damo	Project 11	Now Na!		News On Q	Balikbayan		Irene
RPN 9	TV Shopping				Kapatid Show	RPN Aksyon News		Entertainment Tonight	The Insider	Iron Chef		Three Wishes		Extreme Make-Over		Newswatch Now	Cage For Truth		Kerygma
SBN 21								Sony Music Video				Oras Ng Himala		Oras ng Katotohanan		Sony Music Video		Sony Music Video	
Solar Sports		2006 Jones Cup: Taiwan vs Philippines				Philippine Open '06 MS Finals		Beach Volleyball: FIVB Women's-Greece		Sagupaan	WNBA Action	NBA Madness 2006		World Pool 2006 Masters		Solar Sports Desk	NBA Access	Philippine Open '06 MS Finals	
Sports Plus		John Deere Classic Highlights		Raceworld		Party Poker.com Euro Open 2005				NASCAR Pennsylvania 500 Pocono								BD South Beach	Wild Side Daytona
Star Movies			The Lazarus Child			Three Men And A Baby				The Day After Tomorrow				Blue Crush			Operation Delta Force		
Star World		The Bold & The Beautiful		General Hospital		Monk		The Simpsons	Malcolm In The Middle	Star News Asia	Seinfeld	Beauty & The Geek/ Rockstar		Boston Legal		The Apprentice		Seinfeld	Beauty & The Geek/ Rockstar
Studio 23	Bewitched	YuGi-Oh 3 & 4				Batman Beyond	Xiaolin Showdown	Spirits	Blog	Wazzup Wazzup	CSI Season 5		24 Season 4 (8:20 PM)	It's A Guy Thing (9:10 PM)		News Central	Oprah		Just Shoot Me

TV SCHEDULES ARE SUBJECT TO CHANGE WITHOUT PRIOR NOTICE.

SPIN CITY

KASKADE

Kaskade's greatest hits

"HERE AND NOW," Kaskade's latest CD, is produced by OM Records and released in the country by Universal Records.

The current hit "It's You, It's Me" is the CD's banner single. The album is being distributed across Asia, and also in Europe, South America and Africa.

GEIGER

Geiger's Top Ten entry

AT 17, SINGER-songwriter Teddy Geiger has a Billboard Top Ten hit in his "For You I Will (Confidence)," an acting career with the CBS Series "Love Monkey" and throngs of adoring fans.

His debut album, "Underage Thinking," released in the Philippines last June, carries 12 pop-rock tracks that he wrote and co-produced.

Among these songs are "These Walls," "Night Air," "Seven Days Without You" and "For You I Will."

The "For You I Will" video features popular teen celebrity Kristin Cavallari, from the hit show "Laguna Beach."

GRAND OPENING TODAY!
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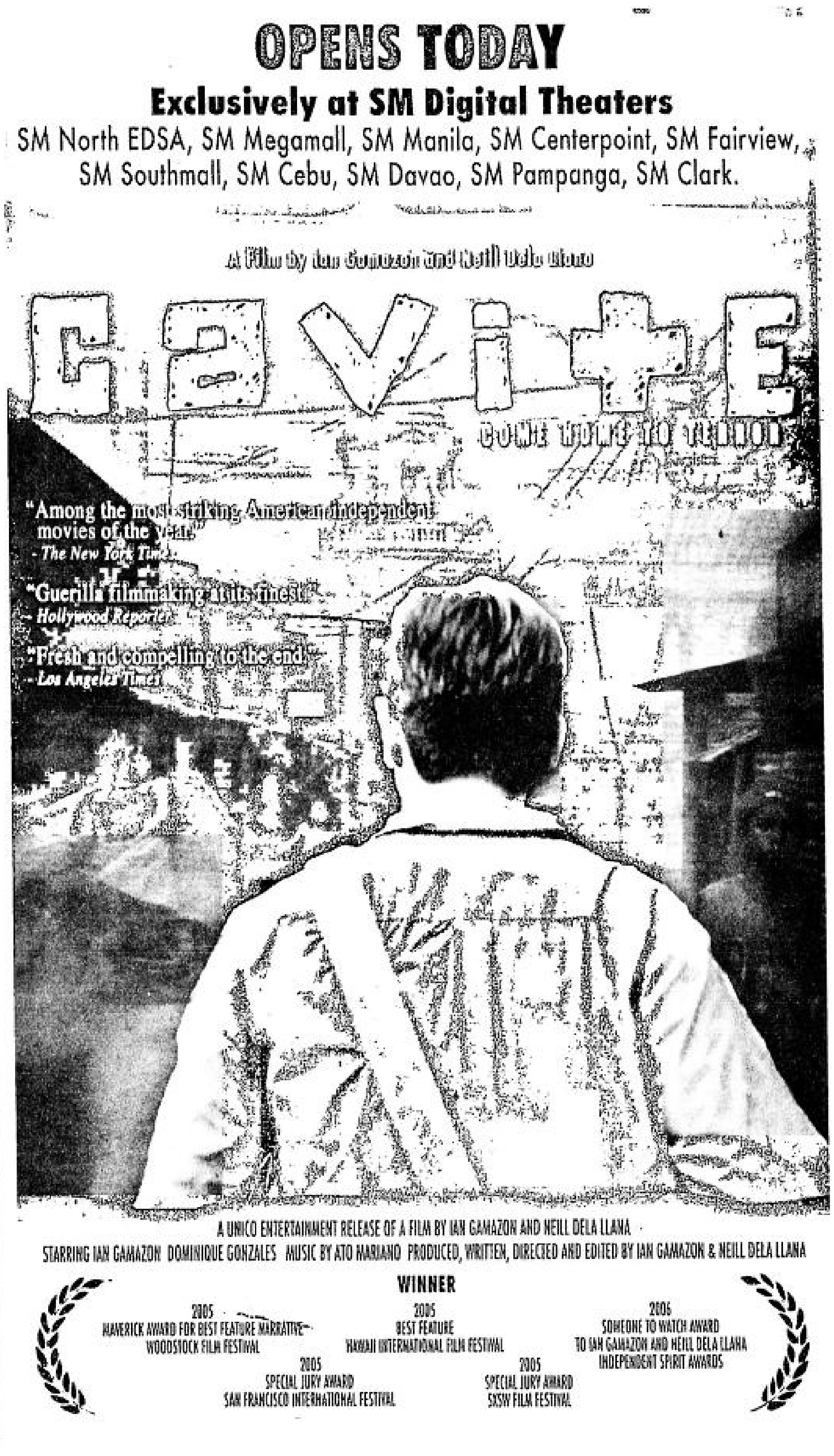
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cavite
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"Guerilla filmmaking at its finest." - Hollywood Reporter
"Fresh and compelling to the end." - Los Angeles Times
A UNICO ENTERTAINMENT RELEASE OF A FILM BY IAN GAMAZON AND NEILL DELA LLANA
STARRING IAN GAMAZON DOMINIQUE GONZALES MUSIC BY ATO MARIANO PRODUCED, WRITTEN, DIRECTED AND EDITED BY IAN GAMAZON & NEILL DELA LLANA
WINNER
2005 MAVERICK AWARD FOR BEST FEATURE NARRATIVE WOODSTOCK FILM FESTIVAL
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2006 SOMEONE TO WATCH AWARD TO IAN GAMAZON AND NEILL DELA LLANA INDEPENDENT SPIRIT AWARDS
2005 SPECIAL JURY AWARD SAN FRANCISCO INTERNATIONAL FESTIVAL
2005 SPECIAL JURY AWARD SXSW FILM FESTIVAL

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Hurry JOIN NOW!!!
Chance upon winning the All-New Volvo S40 in the grand draw! Other prizes at stake are Apple Video iPods & Sony Ericsson W810i Walkman Phones

Promo Mechanics:
1. Consumer buys specially marked packs of M&M's® Chocolate: Milk, Peanut, Crispy or Minis with an M&M's® Fun and Fortune sticker from any participating establishments. Each pack will have a unique alphanumeric raffle code printed on it.
2. To join the promo, just text MPIRATE RAFFLE CODE NAME/ADDRESS/AGE to 29767 for Globe, Touch Mobile, Smart, Addict Mobile, Talk n' Text, & Sun Cellular subscribers. P2.50 will be charged per text message sent.
Example: MPIRATE A1234/John Reyes/234 Ruby St. Makati City/30
For succeeding entries, just type MPIRATE Raffle Code
Example: MPIRATE B5678
3. M&M's® packs with the Fun and Fortune stickers must be kept and shall be presented for verification purposes in order to claim the prize.
4. Promo will run from June 15-August 31, 2006.
5. Prizes include: 1 unit Volvo S40, 10 units Sony Ericsson W810i Walkman Phones & 30 units Apple Video I-Pods.
6. Draws will be held on July 3, July 17, July 31, August 14, August 28, 2006. Grand draw will be on Sept. 8, 2006.
7. All entries are cumulative. Non-winning entries will qualify for the succeeding draws. The more entries sent, the more chances of winning.
8. Cut-off dates for entries Sunday, 11:59pm prior to the draw date. For the Grand Draw, cut-off date will be on July31, 2006 at 11:59pm.
9. Draws will be held at the Information Gateway office in the presence of a representative from BFAD, Information Gateway and Master Foods Philippines, Inc.
10. Winners will receive a call with accompanying instructions on how to claim their prize. They must be prepared to surrender the M&M's® chocolate wrapper with the winning raffle code. Damaged, altered and/or tampered stickers, as well as wrappers with no promo stickers and vice versa will be disqualified and rendered invalid.
11. Verification procedures will be enforced to ensure validity and authenticity of the promo sticker and wrapper. Representatives from BFAD and Master Foods Philippines, Inc. will conduct the verification procedures.
12. Verified winners will then be eligible to claim their prize.
13. Prizes are non-transferable and not convertible to cash.
14. All prizes are tax paid.
15. Employees of Master Foods Philippines, Inc., all their agencies, suppliers, partners and sponsors, including their relatives up to the second degree of consanguinity or affinity are disqualified from joining the promotion.

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IN THEATERS JULY 2006
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GALLERIA 632-911

1 THE BREAK-UP • THX
2 MIAMI VICE
3 WOLF CREEK
4 TAMARA
5 ANT BULLY
6 JUST MY LUCK
7 LADY IN THE WATER
8 SUKOB
9 SUPERMAN RETURNS
10 PIRATES OF THE CARIBBEAN 2

ERMITA 536-7809 to 12

1 MIAMI VICE
2 SUKOB
3 TAMARA
4 WOLF CREEK
5 ANT BULLY
6 THE BREAK-UP
7 JUST MY LUCK

METRO EAST 682-8193 • 682-8199

1 THE BREAK-UP
2 MIAMI VICE
3 SUKOB
4 ANT BULLY
5 WOLF CREEK
6 TAMARA
7 JUST MY LUCK
8 PIRATES OF THE CARIBBEAN 2

NOVALICHES 935-3231 / 935-3229-30

1 MIAMI VICE
2 WOLF CREEK
3 ANT BULLY
4 SUKOB

CITISQUARE MALABON 288-2576

1 MIAMI VICE
2 SUKOB
3 RESERVE
4 RESERVE

PIONEER 687-5378

1 SUKOB
2 MIAMI VICE
3 ANT BULLY
4 WOLF CREEK

"MIAMI VICE" TRIVIA PROMO

Answer the "Miami Vice" trivia questions in our daily movieguide. Cut and drop entries at any Robinsons Movieworld branch on or before August 16. Winners will get any of the following:

- Crowne Plaza Galleria Manila Gift Certificate
- Gift packs from Solar-UIP
- Robinsons Gift Certificate

*winners will be notified via registered mail only.

Tune in to Wave 89.1 to win free movie invites.

Wave 89.1 "MIAMI VICE" Car Stick-On

Drive by Robinsons Malls and get a limited "Miami Vice" sticker and other exciting giveaways.

JULY 29 (Saturday) 3:00-6:00PM
(Robinsons Metro East Driveway)
AUGUST 05 (Saturday) 3:00-6:00PM
(Robinsons Pioneer Driveway)

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COLIN FARRELL
MIAMI VICE

showing at
ROBINSONS MOVIEWORLD
on AUGUST 02

STA. ROSA (049) 837-0907

1 NACHO LIBRE
2 WILD ORCHID 2
3 SUKOB
4 LADY IN THE WATER

LIPA (043) 757-3664 (043) 312-5870

1 NACHO LIBRE
2 SUKOB
3 THE NUN
4 LADY IN THE WATER

DASMARIÑAS (046) 852-2125 (046) 416-4332

1 MIAMI VICE
2 SUKOB
3 JUST MY LUCK
4 NACHO LIBRE

ANGELES (045) 892-2348

1 ANT BULLY
2 WILD ORCHID 2
3 SUKOB
4 NACHO LIBRE

IMUS (046) 875-3838 (046) 471-8188

1 SUKOB
2 MIAMI VICE
3 ANT BULLY
4 LOVE WRECKED

STARMILLS (045) 875-1927 (045) 961-6270

1 MIAMI VICE
2 ANT BULLY
3 SUKOB
4 NACHO LIBRE
5 TAKE THE LEAD
6 JUST MY LUCK

BACOLOD (034) 441-0458 (034) 441-0459

1 LADY IN THE WATER
2 SUKOB
3 UNITED 93
4 AN AMERICAN HAUNTING
5 WILD ORCHID 2
6 SPL

ILOILO (033) 336-8070

1 LADY IN THE WATER
2 SUKOB
3 UNITED 93
4 WILD ORCHID 2

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the antBULLY

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MTRCB Rating: GENERAL AUDIENCE

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ANT BULLY
11:00AM 1:00PM 3:00PM 5:00PM
SUPERMAN RETURNS
9:00PM

PREMIERE CINEMA
SUKOB

DIRECTOR'S CLUB
MIAMI VICE

CENTERSTAGE
RESERVED

1 THE BREAK-UP
2 ANT BULLY
3 JUST MY LUCK
4 TAMARA
5 PIRATES OF CARIBBEAN
6 MIAMI VICE

THE PODIUM
CINEMA 1
ANT BULLY
CINEMA 2
MIAMI VICE
633-8976

SM CITY SOUTHMALL 806-6888

1 ANT BULLY
2 PIRATES OF CARIBBEAN
3 SUKOB
4 MIAMI VICE
5 JUST MY LUCK
6 THE BREAK-UP
7 SUPERMAN RETURNS
8 TAMARA
9 CAVITE

SM CITY BICUTAN 776-3055

1 ANT BULLY
2 SUKOB
3 PIRATES OF CARIBBEAN
4 MIAMI VICE

SM MEGACINEMA 633-1901

1 LADY IN THE WATER
2 JUST MY LUCK
3 ANT BULLY
4 MIAMI VICE
5 PIRATES OF CARIBBEAN
6 NACHO LIBRE
7 SUPERMAN RETURNS
8 TAMARA
9 SUKOB
10 SUKOB
11 CAVITE
12 THE BREAK-UP

SM CITY FAIRVIEW 935-0749

1 CAVITE
2 SUPERMAN RETURNS
3 NACHO LIBRE
4 PIRATES OF CARIBBEAN
5 THE BREAK-UP
6 SUKOB
7 MIAMI VICE
8 ANT BULLY
9 WHITE LADY
10 LADY IN THE WATER
11 RV
12 JUST MY LUCK

SM CITY STA. MESA 716-1416

1 MIAMI VICE
2 PIRATES OF CARIBBEAN
3 ANT BULLY
4 JUST MY LUCK
5 SUKOB
6 LADY IN THE WATER
7 SUPEWHITE LADY
8 CAVITE
9 TAMARA
10 THE BREAK-UP

SM CITY SAN LAZARO 786-2488

1 ANT BULLY
2 MIAMI VICE
3 PIRATES OF CARIBBEAN
4 THE BREAK-UP
JUST MY LUCK
5 SUKOB

SM NORTH EDSA 929-5452

THE BLOCK
1 ANT BULLY
2 SUKOB
3 PIRATES OF CARIBBEAN
4 MIAMI VICE
5 ANT BULLY
6 SUKOB
7 MIAMI VICE
8 TAMARA
9 CAVITE
10 THE BREAK-UP
11 LADY IN THE WATER
12 WHITE LADY

SM CITY MANILA 523-9240

1 TAMARA
2 SUPERMAN RETURNS
3 CAVITE
4 PIRATES OF CARIBBEAN
5 ANT BULLY
6 MIAMI VICE
7 SUKOB
8 THE BREAK-UP
9 WHITE LADY
10 SUKOB
11 LADY IN THE WATER
12 JUST MY LUCK

SM CITY DASMARINAS (046)4323201-04

1 JUST MY LUCK
2 SUKOB
3 LOVEWRECKED
4 PIRATES OF CARIBBEAN

SM VALENZUELA 293-3917

1 PIRATES OF CARIBBEAN
2 JUST MY LUCK
3 SUKOB
4 NACHO LIBRE

SM CITY SUCAT 829-4975

1 JUST MY LUCK
2 MIAMI VICE
3 SUKOB
4 ANT BULLY

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Ryan Agoncillo is Paolo Santillian, a young free-spirited man who suddenly gives himself into depression when he lost his big break in filmmaking and when he saw his girlfriend with another man. But he never gave up on love when he met a beautiful girl named Lynette. What follows is an unforeseeable twist proving that love has its many mysterious ways.

umaaraw , umuulan

Starring Ryan Agoncillo, Precious Lara Quigaman and Herbert Bautista

A Story by Luigi Santiago
Derecied by Richard Arellano

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1 PIRATES OF CARIBBEAN
2 CHAOS
3 NACHO LIBRE
4 SUKOB

SM CITY MARILAO (044)9332013-17

PIRATES OF CARIBBEAN
SUKOB
JUST MY LUCK
UNITED 93

SM CITY BACOOR (046)417-3868

1 LADY IN THE WATER
2 JUST MY LUCK
3 MIAMI VICE
4 PIRATES OF CARIBBEAN
5 ANT BULLY
6 SUKOB
7 WHITE LADY
8 SUPERMAN RETURNS

SM CITY BATANGAS 885-6401-04

1 CHAOS
2 SUKOB
3 LADY IN THE WATER
4 THE NUN

SM CITY LUCENA (042)7108977-80

1 LADY IN THE WATER
2 TAKE THE LEAD
3 RV
4 SUKOB

SM CITY CLARK (045)625-5844-45

1 PIRATES OF CARIBBEAN
2 SUKOB
3 CAVITE
4 ANT BULLY
5 WHITE LADY
6 SUKOB

SM CITY PAMPANGA (045)9637681-85

1 SUKOB
2 ANT BULLY
3 CAVITE
4 WHITE LADY
5 SUKOB
6 PIRATES OF CARIBBEAN

SM SUPERCENTER MOLINO (046)474-3160

1 SUKOB
2 PIRATES OF CARIBBEAN
3 JUST MY LUCK
4 LADY IN THE WATER

SM CITY STA. ROSA (049)5341265-66

1 NACHO LIBRE
2 PIRATES OF CARIBBEAN
3 SUKOB
4 LADY IN THE WATER

VISAYAS MINDANAO

SM CITY CEBU (032)231-3876

2 ANT BULLY
3 LOVEWRECKED
4 SUPERMAN RETURNS
5 CAVITE
6 SUKOB
7 SUKOB
8 PIRATES OF CARIBBEAN

SM CITY ILOILO (033)3209422

1 UNITED 93
2 RESERVED
3 SUKOB
4 SUPERMAN RETURNS
5 PIRATES OF CARIBBEAN
6 LADY IN THE WATER
7 RESERVED
8 NACHO LIBRE

SM CITY DAVAO (082)2976998

1 PIRATES OF CARIBBEAN
2 NACHO LIBRE
3 SUKOB
4 CAVITE
5 SUKOB
6 AMERICAN HAUNTING

SM CITY CAGAYAN (088)859-2884

1 NACHO LIBRE
2 LADY IN THE WATER
3 SUKOB
4 UNITED 93

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EVENT CALENDAR SM SHOWTIME EVENT CALENDAR

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Oyayi

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AUGUST 5 AND 6, 2006
SM Megamall Cinema 4
10:00 a.m., 1:00 p.m., 4:00 p.m.

For ticket inquiries, please call 845 2659

*FOR MORE INFORMATION ON MOVIE LISTING, MTRCB RATING, SCREENING SCHEDULES AND THE LATEST HAPPENINGS AT SM CINEMA

JB Band

JB Band at Mandarin

PERFORMING ON AUG. 3, 10, 24, 31 and Sept. 7, 21, 28, 9 p.m., at the Mandarin Oriental's Captain's Bar is the JB Band. After its first major concert and album launch, the band—with its repertoire of soul, pop, jazz and ballroom music—has been a regular attraction at the venue for the past two months.

Call 522-2765 or (0921)-556-7812.

Aug. 5

- Pop/R&B singer **King** stars in "King by Request," at the **Sports Complex Maysan** in Valenzuela City. Special guests are **JC Moya, Randell Panganiban, The Band Called Rush**, and King's sister **Nina**. Call 912-2015 or (0916) 521-7740.
- **Flinstones and the Gang** plays at **Merk's Bar Bistro**, Level 3, Greenbelt 3, Makati City. Repeats on Aug. 12 and 26.

Aug. 7

- **Silk & Steel** takes center stage tonight and all Mondays of August at **Merk's Bar Bistro**, Greenbelt 3, Makati City.

Aug. 8

- Retro band **Aretha & the Souled Out** band performs tonight and all Tuesdays of August and on Aug. 19 at Merk's.

Aug. 9

- **Eddie Katindig, Richard Merk**perform with jazz vocalist **Julia Duncan** for Merk's Wednesday Jazz Festival.
- **Bamboo** at **Dish** (The Loop, ABS-CBN Compound) on, 7 p.m. with **Hale, Rocksteady, Sugarfree** and **Barbie.**
- **Henry Katindig** and **Friends** playing jazz fusion; pop and Latin jazz at **Teak Bistro**, Power Plant Mall, Rockwell Center. Show starts at 6:30 p.m.

Aug. 18

Telenovela pioneer and singer **Juan Rodrigo** joins the **Tiongco Brothers, Marri Nallos** and **Christan** in a fundraising concert for the Congregation of the Blessed Sacrament, Province of Our Lady of the Assumption.

KID FIT

'Monster House'

IN COLUMBIA PICTURES' new comedy thrill ride, "Monster House," three kids cross over to the other side of the street to unlock a mystery and experience the greatest adventure of their lives. They must do battle with the mysterious house that is determined to eat every trick-or-treater in sight on Holloween.

DJ has the plan. Jenny, his new friend, has the brains. Chowder, DJ's best friend, doesn't have a clue.

The animated feature from executive producers Robert Zemeckis and Steven Spielberg brings together a stellar cast of actors to lend their voices to the characters. They include Steve Buscemi, Maggie Gyllenhaal, Kevin James, Jason Lee, Catherine O'Hara, John Heder, Kathleen Turner and Fred Willard.

SHOW TIME

JUAN RODRIGO, left, Flintstones and the Gang, right

WHAT IS MI6?

FOUNDED 1909 IN THE U.K. AND MADE FAMOUS BY THE JAMES BOND FILMS, MI6 (MILITARY INTELLIGENCE SECTION 6) IS RESPONSIBLE FOR ALL ESPIONAGE ACTIVITIES WORLDWIDE. THEIR AGENTS ARE LICENSED TO KILL.

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vince vaughn jennifer aniston
the break-up
pick a side
R-13
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2ND WEEK!

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THE ONLY CINEPLEX IN THE COUNTRY — Gateway CINEPLEX*10 — FULL STADIUM SEATING

MIAMI VICE
1:10 / 4:10 / 7:10 / 10:10

ANT BULLY
[illegible]:00 / 3:00 / 5:00 / 7:00 / 9:00

TAMARA
2:00 / 4:20 / 6:40 / 9:00

SUKOB
12:55 / 3:05 / 5:15 / 7:25 / 9:35

WOLF CREEK
12:50 / 3:05 / 5:20 / 7:35 / 9:50

PIRATES OF THE CARIBBEAN 2
12:50 / 3:50 / 6:50 / 9:50

DOLBY DIGITAL·EX

JUST MY LUCK
2:15 / 4:45 / 7:15 / 9:45

THE BREAK - UP
2:40 / 2:55 / 5:10 / 7:25 / 9:40

MIAMI VICE
12:00 / 3:00 / 6:00 / 9:00

Araneta MALL 5

MIAMI VICE
12:05 R4 / 2:05 / 5:05 / 8:05

ANT BULLY
12:30 / 2:00 / 4:00 / 6:00 / 8:00

PIRATES OF THE CARIBBEAN 2
12:10 R3 / 2:30 / 5:30 / 8:30

SUKOB
12:10 R2 / 2:00 / 4:10 / [illegible]:20 / 8:3[illegible]

WOLF CREEK
2:05 R3 / [illegible]40 / [illegible]55 / 6:10 / 8:25

DOLBY DIGITAL dts SDDS

For ticket inquiries, please call TicketNet at 911-5555 or log on to www.ticketnet.com.ph

ARANETA COLISEUM

August 6, Sunday UAAP GAMES
2pm UP vs UE (Srs) / 4pm ADMU vs UST (Srs)

INXS : SWITCH ON MANILA TOUR
August 15, Tuesday - 8:00 pm

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AT THE CINEMAS

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THX

G1 GLORIETTA 1	1 THE ANT BULLY	2 MIAMI VICE	3 TAMARA	4 SUKOB			
G4 GLORIETTA 4	1 THE ANT BULLY	2 JUST MY LUCK	3 THX MIAMI VICE GUARANTEED SEATS	4 PIRATES OF THE CARRIBEAN 2 / THE PRODUCERS	5 WOLF CREEK	6 SUKOB	7 THE BREAK-UP
GB1 GREENBELT 1	1 SUKOB	2 MIAMI VICE					
GB3 GREENBELT 3	1 THX THE ANT BULLY GUARANTEED SEATS	2 THX MIAMI VICE GUARANTEED SEATS	3 JUST MY LUCK GUARANTEED SEATS	4 THE BREAK-UP GUARANTEED SEATS	5 SUKOB GUARANTEED SEATS		
ATC ALABANG TOWN CENTER	1 THX MIAMI VICE	2 SUKOB	3 THE ANT BULLY	4 WOLF CREEK	5 THE BREAK-UP		
ACC AYALA CENTER CEBU	1 SUKOB	2 PIRATES OF THE CARRIBEAN: DEAD MAN'S CHEST	3 THE ANT BULLY	4 LOVEWRECKED			
M2 MARKET! MARKET!	1 SUKOB	2 WOLF CREEK	3 TAMARA	4 MIAMI VICE	5 THE ANT BULLY		

At the Activity Center

Customer Service text hotline: 0917 6095900
Customer Service Numbers: Glorietta - 752 7272; from 10am to 8pm
Greenbelt - 752 4853. from 11am to 12mn
Alabang Town Center - 842 2782; from 10am to 8pm
Ayala Center Cebu - (032) 231 5342 loc 324
Market! Market! - 886 7519

GLORIETTA	ALABANG TOWN CENTER
Hondaworld 2006 August 2 to 6, 2006	Automatic Center Exhibit August 1 to 11, 2006
AYALA CENTER CEBU	**MARKET! MARKET!**
The Golden Weekend August 6, 2006	2006 Addidas Street Ball Challenge August 5 & 6, 2006

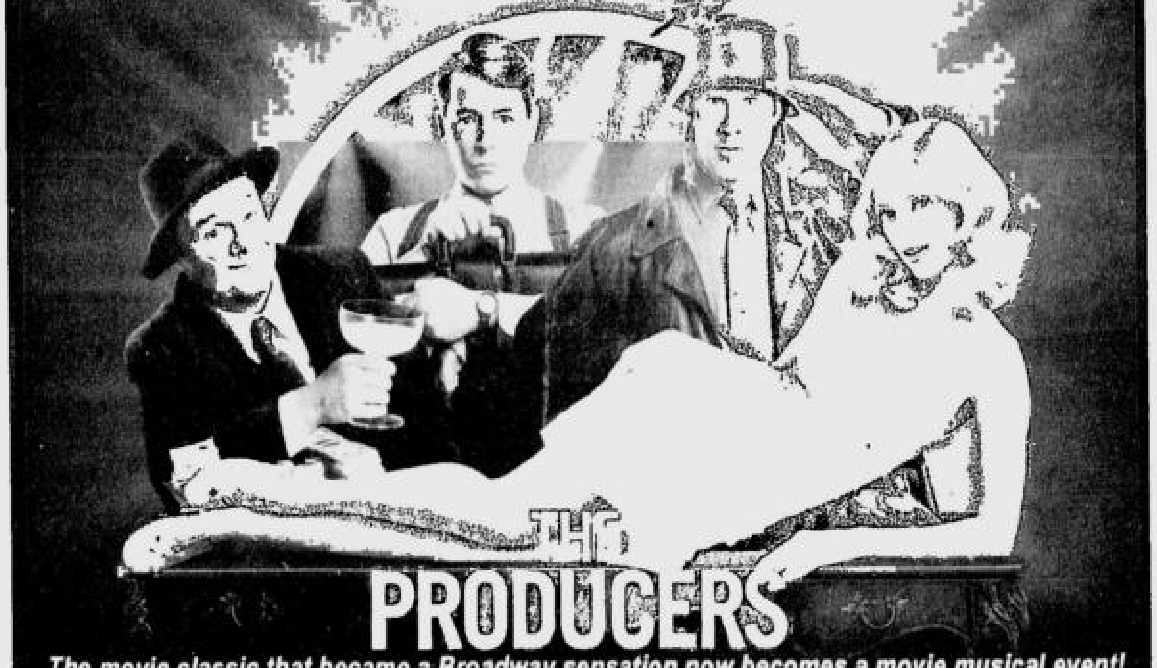
GREENBELT — Jazz Nights at GB 2
July 26, 2006

Greenbelt 1 Onstage — Repertory Philippines presents
Walt Disney's ALADDIN JR.
at REP's Globe Theater - Aug. 12, 20, 26, Sept. 3, 9, Oct. 14 & 22
For inquiries, pls. call 887-0710

Ayala MUSEUM — Ode To The Pasig River
June 27 to August 27, 2006
For inquiries, please call 757-7117 to 21 loc 29 or visit www.ayalamuseum.org

NOW ON ITS 2ND WEEK EXCLUSIVELY AT GLORIETTA 4 CINEMAS

LANE BRODERICK THURMAN FERRELL



THE PRODUCERS

The movie classic that became a Broadway sensation now becomes a movie musical event!

GOLDEN GLOBE NOMINATIONS:
Best Picture Musical / Comedy
Best Actor Musical / Comedy (Nathan Lane)
Best Supporting Actor (Will Ferrell)
Best Song (There's Nothing Like A Show On Broadway)

MTRCB Rating: Parental Guidance 13 (PG-13)

COLUMBIA PICTURES · Ayala Malls CINEMAS

Ayala Malls

GREENBELT 1

Shopping Spree! Winning Spree!

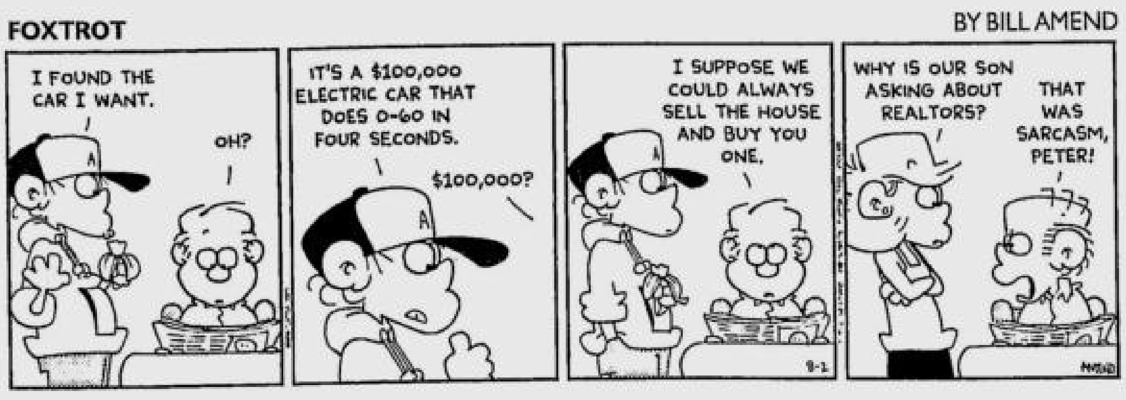
Get a chance to win exciting prizes for every P300 worth of purchase

May 6 - October 31, 2006

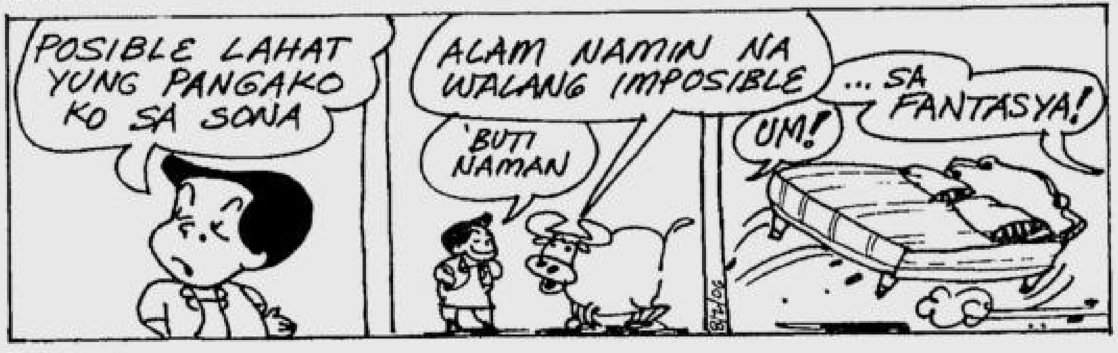
Per DTI-NCR Permit No. A1-342, Series of 2006

Via Mare · National Book Store · BTIC · Pho Hoa · GREENBELT

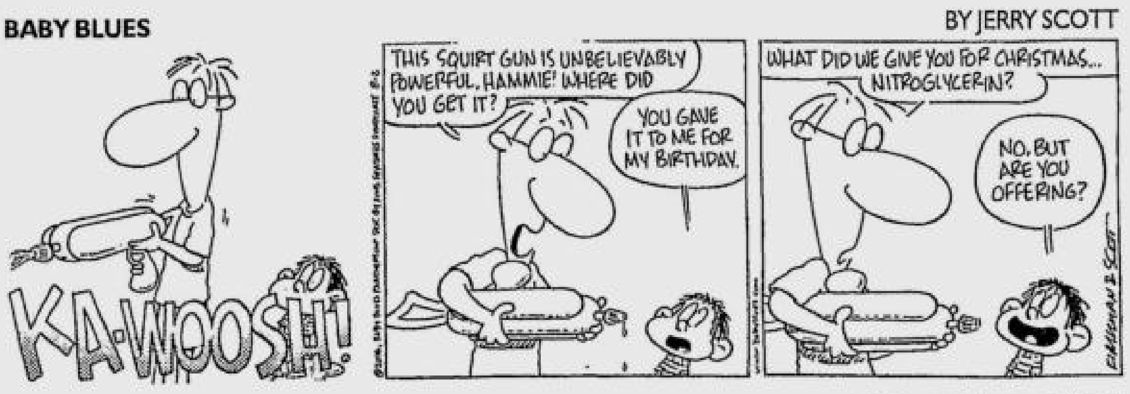
FOXTROT BY BILL AMEND


I FOUND THE CAR I WANT.
OH?
IT'S A $100,000 ELECTRIC CAR THAT DOES 0-60 IN FOUR SECONDS.
$100,000?
I SUPPOSE WE COULD ALWAYS SELL THE HOUSE AND BUY YOU ONE.
WHY IS OUR SON ASKING ABOUT REALTORS?
THAT WAS SARCASM, PETER!
8-1

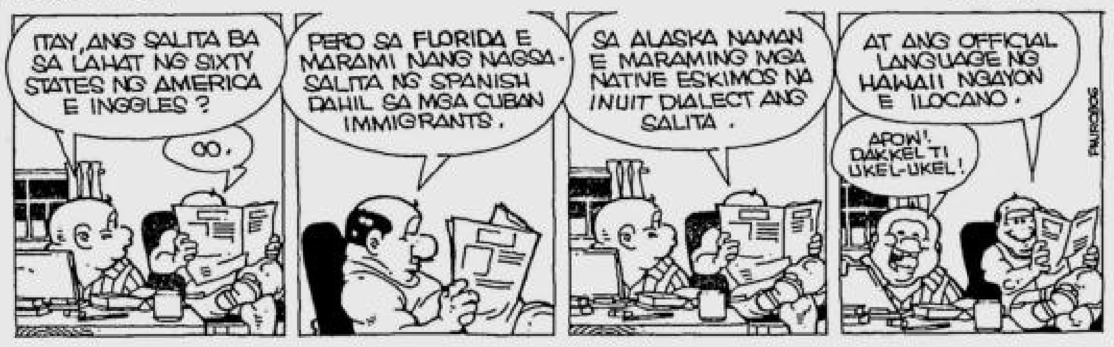
A. LIPIN BY JESS ABRERA


POSIBLE LAHAT YUNG PANGAKO KO SA SONA
ALAM NAMIN NA WALANG IMPOSIBLE
'BUTI NAMAN
UM!
... SA FANTASYA!

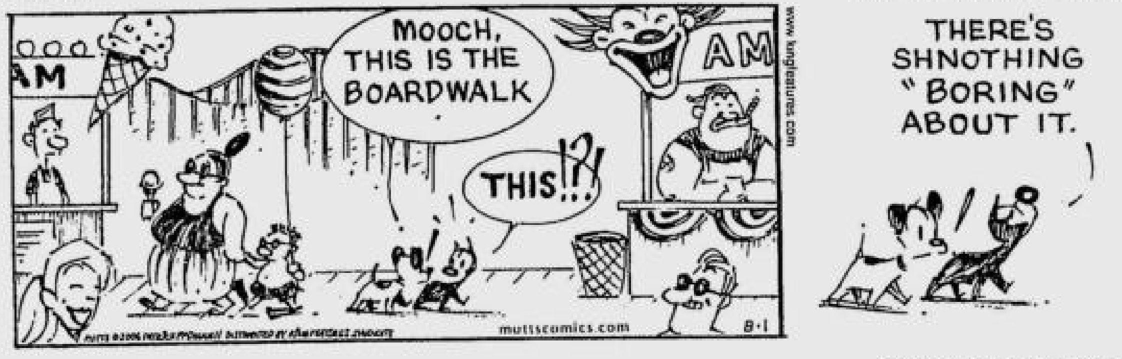
BABY BLUES BY JERRY SCOTT


KA-WOOSH!
THIS SQUIRT GUN IS UNBELIEVABLY POWERFUL, HAMMIE! WHERE DID YOU GET IT?
YOU GAVE IT TO ME FOR MY BIRTHDAY.
WHAT DID WE GIVE YOU FOR CHRISTMAS... NITROGLYCERIN?
NO, BUT ARE YOU OFFERING?
KIRKMAN & SCOTT

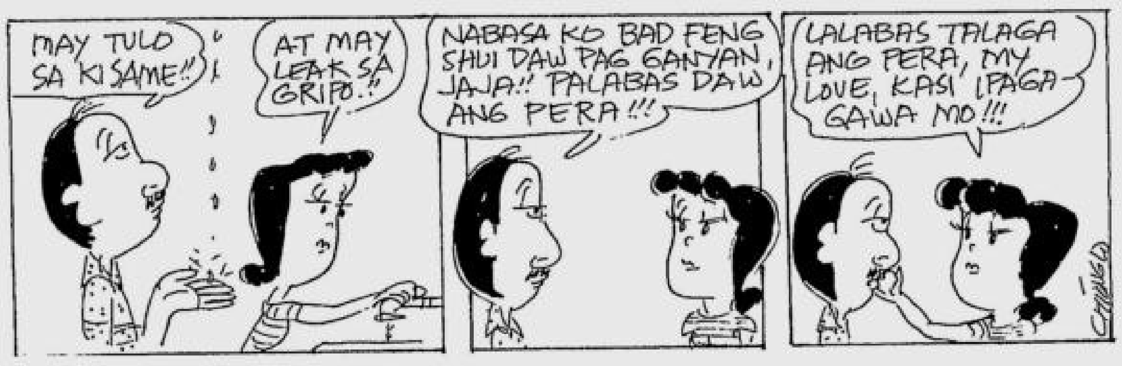
PUGAD BABOY BY P.M. JUNIOR


ITAY, ANG SALITA BA SA LAHAT NG SIXTY STATES NG AMERICA E INGGLES?
OO.
PERO SA FLORIDA E MARAMI NANG NAGSASALITA NG SPANISH DAHIL SA MGA CUBAN IMMIGRANTS.
SA ALASKA NAMAN E MARAMING MGA NATIVE ESKIMOS NA INUIT DIALECT ANG SALITA.
AT ANG OFFICIAL LANGUAGE NG HAWAII NGAYON E ILOCANO.
APOW! DAKKEL TI UKEL-UKEL!

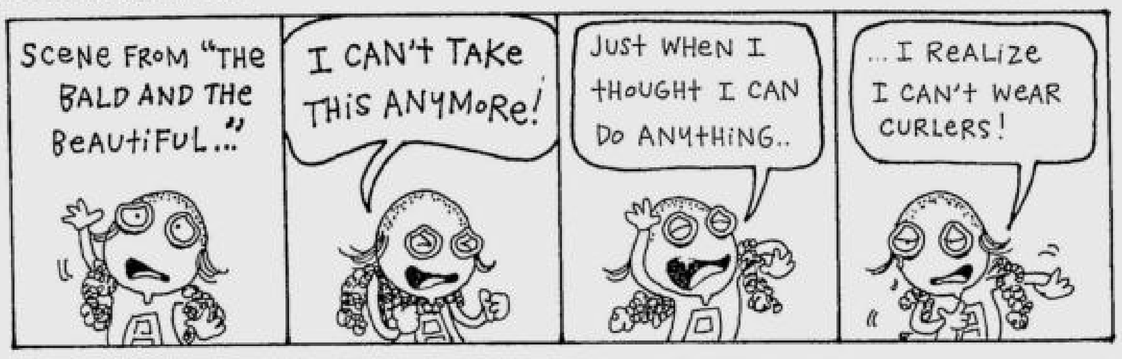
MUTTS BY PATRICK McDONNELL


MOOCH, THIS IS THE BOARDWALK
THIS!?!
THERE'S SHNOTHING "BORING" ABOUT IT.
www.kingfeatures.com
muttscomics.com
8-1

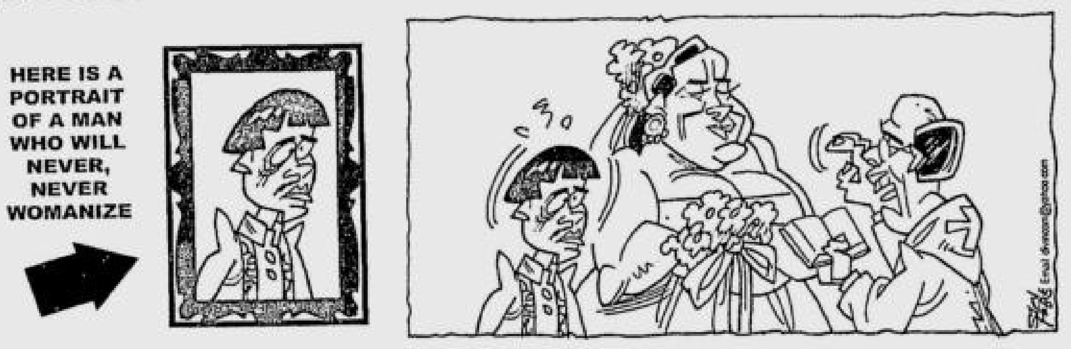
LOVEKNOTS BY ELIZABETH CHIONGLO


MAY TULO SA KISAME!!
AT MAY LEAK SA GRIPO!!
NABASA KO BAD FENG SHUI DAW PAG GANYAN, JAJA!! PALABAS DAW ANG PERA!!!
LALABAS TALAGA ANG PERA, MY LOVE, KASI IPAGAGAWA MO!!!
CHIONGLO

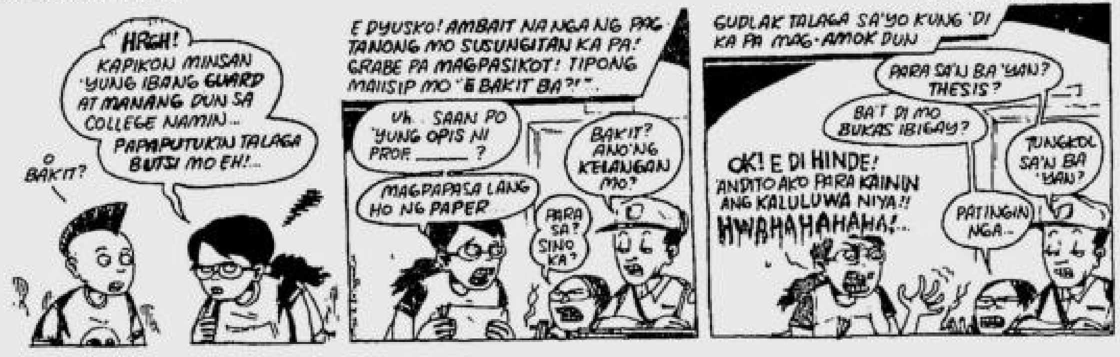
ATOMO AND WEBOY BY LYRA GARCELLANO


SCENE FROM "THE BALD AND THE BEAUTIFUL..."
I CAN'T TAKE THIS ANYMORE!
JUST WHEN I THOUGHT I CAN DO ANYTHING..
...I REALIZE I CAN'T WEAR CURLERS!

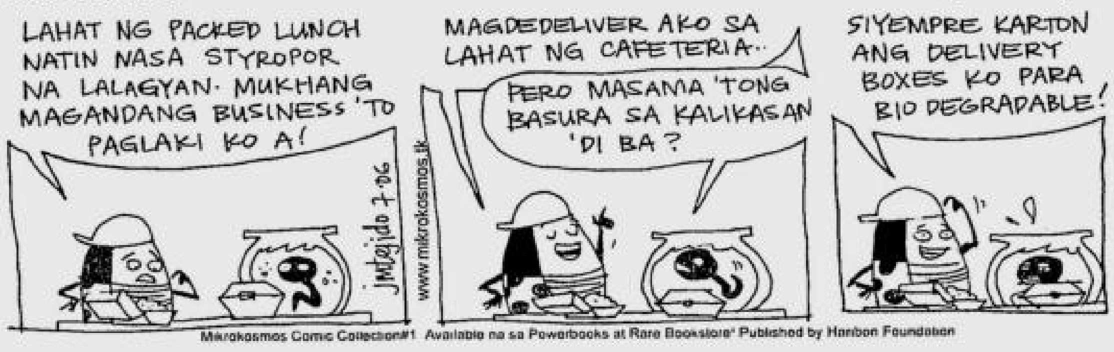
DIVINE COMEDY BY STEVEN PABALINAS


HERE IS A PORTRAIT OF A MAN WHO WILL NEVER, NEVER WOMANIZE

KIKO MACHINE BY MANIX ABRERA

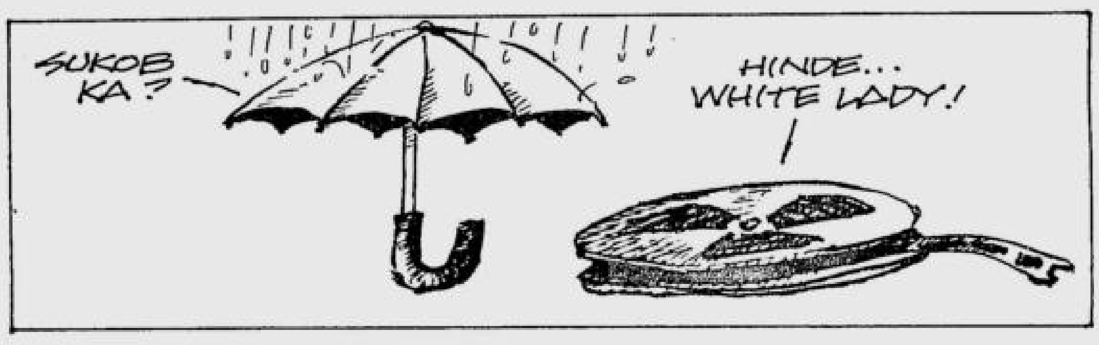

HRGH! KAPIKON MINSAN 'YUNG IBANG GUARD AT MANANG DUN SA COLLEGE NAMIN...
PAPAPUTUKIN TALAGA BUTSI MO EH!...
O BAKIT?
E DYUSKO! AMBAIT NA NGA NG PAGTANONG MO SUSUNGITAN KA PA! GRABE PA MAGPASIKOT! TIPONG MAIISIP MO "E BAKIT BA?!"
UH... SAAN PO 'YUNG OPIS NI PROF. ____?
BAKIT? ANO'NG KELANGAN MO?
MAGPAPASA LANG HO NG PAPER
PARA SA? SINO KA?
GUDLAK TALAGA SA'YO KUNG 'DI KA PA MAG-AMOK DUN
PARA SA'N BA 'YAN? THESIS?
BA'T DI MO BUKAS IBIGAY?
TUNGKOL SA'N BA 'YAN?
OK! E DI HINDE! ANDITO AKO PARA KAININ ANG KALULUWA NIYA!! HWAHAHAHAHA!...
PATINGIN NGA...

MIKROKOSMOS BY JOMIKE TEJIDO

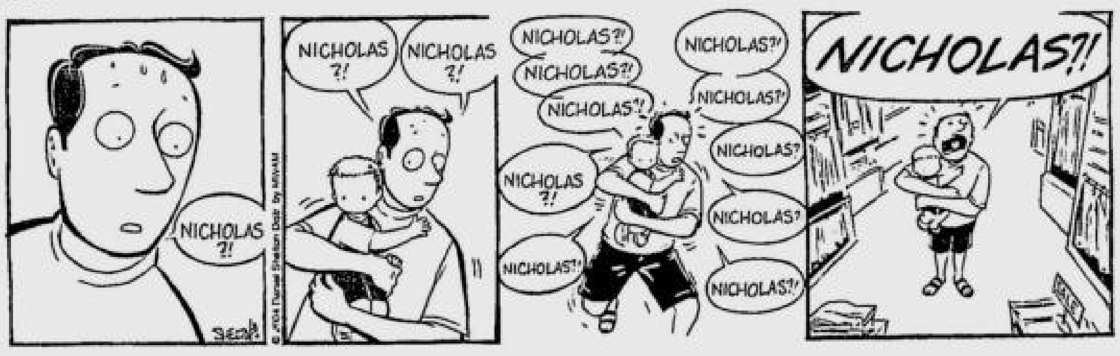

LAHAT NG PACKED LUNCH NATIN NASA STYROPOR NA LALAGYAN. MUKHANG MAGANDANG BUSINESS 'TO PAGLAKI KO A!
jmtejido 7-06
www.mikrokosmos.tk
MAGDEDELIVER AKO SA LAHAT NG CAFETERIA..
PERO MASAMA 'TONG BASURA SA KALIKASAN 'DI BA?
SIYEMPRE KARTON ANG DELIVERY BOXES KO PARA BIO DEGRADABLE!

Mikrokosmos Comic Collection#1 Available na sa Powerbooks at Rare Bookstore* Published by Hanbon Foundation

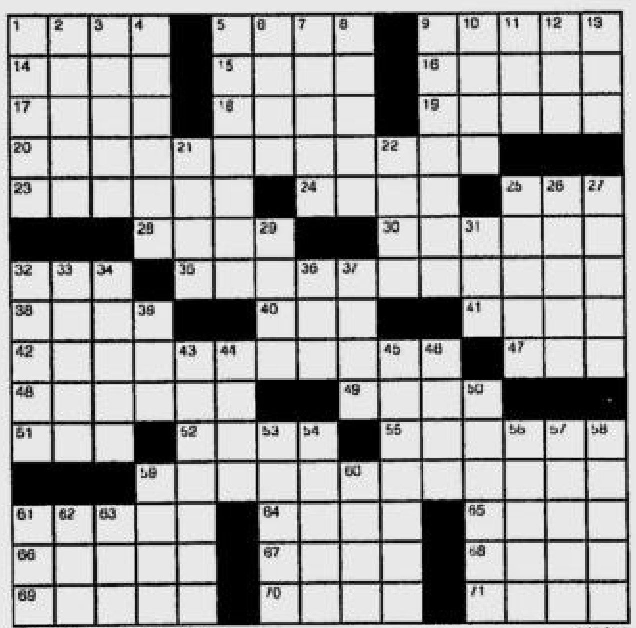
TULDOK BY PAPU AND TATUM MILAMBILING


SUKOB KA?
HINDE... WHITE LADY!

BEN BY DANIEL SHELTON


NICHOLAS ?!
NICHOLAS ?!
NICHOLAS ?!
NICHOLAS?!
NICHOLAS?!
NICHOLAS?!
NICHOLAS?!
NICHOLAS ?!
NICHOLAS?
NICHOLAS?
NICHOLAS?!
NICHOLAS?!
NICHOLAS?!

DAILY CROSSWORD



By Philip J. Anderson
Portland, OR
8/2/06

ACROSS
1 Hosiery hue
5 Gillette razor
9 Entire range
14 Word before beer or canal
15 God of love
16 Not in the dark
17 Actor Ray
18 Monopoly fee
19 __ cum laude
20 Competition for orators?
23 Els and Banks
24 Spoken
25 Mad. Ave. output
28 Tissue additive
30 40th president
32 Play part
35 Competition for astronomers?
38 Uncommon
40 Motorists' org.
41 Mimic
42 Competition for witches?
47 D.C. clock setting
48 Fanons, formerly
49 "Peter Pan" pirate
51 Journalist Hentoff
52 Govt. agency
55 Rowling's hero
59 Competition for clerics?
61 Spokes
64 __ she blows!
65 Levin and Gershwin
66 Merge
67 Puerto __
68 Composer Porter
69 Lawn tools
70 River to the Baltic
71 Editor's notation

DOWN
1 Obliterate
2 "The __ of Money"
3 Japanese sci-fi film
4 Perfect place
5 Spray dispenser
6 "Bang a Gong (Get It On)" band
7 Concerto part
8 Fall flower
9 Casino regular
10 Not at home
11 Periodical, briefly
12 Fancy vase
13 Social affair
21 Actor Lugosi
22 __ avis
25 Slack-jawed
26 "South Pacific" extras
27 Hagar's dog
29 Panache
31 Ottoman official
32 Flaming felony
33 "It Happened One Night" director
34 Pick up the tab
36 Droop
37 Slot inserts
39 Mansion wing
43 Southpaws
44 Words of comprehension
45 Sovereign ruler
46 Fair-hiring grp.
50 Study of morals
53 Paris subway
54 Plant louse
56 Seer's deck
57 On-line deal
58 Alarm clock button
59 Web location
60 Shoestring
61 Capek play
62 Literary miscellany
63 Cartoonist Browne

Tuesday's Puzzle Solved

B	U	T		J	A	B	S		P	R	E	W	A	R
M	T	A		A	L	O	E		R	E	N	E	G	E
W	A	R		Z	I	N	G		O	L	D	I	E	S
		O	Z	Z	I	E	O	S	B	O	U	R	N	E
A	L	T	A					T	E	A	R	S	A	T
R	I	C	K	Y	R	I	C	A	R	D	O			
S	B	A		I	O	L	A				S	O	B	S
O	R	R		N	E	L	S	O	N	S		P	O	P
N	A	D	A				E	R	O	S		E	X	O
			D	A	V	I	D	B	R	E	N	N	E	R
T	R	O	O	P	E	R					S	E	R	E
H	A	R	R	I	E	T	T	U	B	M	A	N		
E	D	G	I	E	R		U	C	L	A		D	N	A
F	I	A	N	C	E		S	A	U	L		E	I	N
T	O	N	G	E	D		K	L	E	E		D	X	I

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8/2/06

HOROSCOPE

YOU BORN TODAY: You're determined. Plus, you have style and pizzazz. Whatever you do has your particular style. You're often unconventional and frequently go to extremes. (You believe in living life to the hilt.) Nevertheless, you style flex easily and can survive in many different environments. You'll let go of something this year in order to make room for something new to enter.
Birthdate of: Peter O'Toole, actor; Edward Furlong, actor; Jeremy Castle, singer/songwriter.

ARIES (March 21 to April 19): It's easy to indulge yourself today while having a good time. That's OK. As Mae West said, "Too much of a good thing is wonderful."

TAURUS (April 20 to May 20): Be careful you don't go overboard making promises to family members or partners today, because this is exactly what you're tempted to do. (It seems to be a good thing at the time.)

GEMINI (May 21 to June 20): You're definitely multitasking today. You're talking to everyone and trying to be everywhere. Don't overextend yourself trying to please anyone.

CANCER (June 21 to July 22): Watch your pennies today. You're tempted to go overboard in some kind of financial transactions. You might pay too much money for something, or you might buy something that's extravagant.

LEO (July 23 to Aug. 22): You're a generous person by nature (Leo is very openhearted.) Think twice before you make a big, magnanimous gesture today. Try for moderation.

VIRGO (Aug. 23 to Sept. 22): You find it rewarding to do something on behalf of someone else today. Any kind of service for others will bring you great satisfaction right now.

LIBRA (Sept. 23 to Oct. 22): If you feel a friend or a group is encouraging you to go beyond your comfort level in something, listen to that tiny voice inside you. (That voice is probably right.)

SCORPIO (Oct. 23 to Nov. 21): You easily impress important people today. However, you might make promises in a lighthearted way. Oops! Don't bite off more than you can chew.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22 to Dec. 21): Travel plans and matters connected with publishing, the media and higher education look exciting. However, if something looks too good to be true, it probably is.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22 to Jan. 19): Gifts, goodies and favors come your way . Keep your pockets open. You can definitely benefit from the wealth and resources of others.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20 to Feb. 18): You'll enjoy the company of others today. You want to see other people, and you want to be seen. You feel popular and very much in the mix of things. (Great!)

PISCES (Feb. 19 to March 20): You're eager to please or impress someone at work . Don't overextend yourself or promise more than you can deliver. Be realistic about what you can offer.

CONCEPTIS SU DOKU

Conceptis Sudoku

by Dave Green

2			9	3				5
	9						4	
		6	7			8		
						1		2
3								7
9		4						
		8			3	2		
	4						8	
6				8	7			3

Difficulty Level ★★★
8/02

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HOW TO PLAY SU DOKU

Fill the grid so that every column, every row and every 3x3 box contains the digits 1 to 9.
Tips and program at www.sudoku.com

Answer to previous puzzle

5	6	9	3	2	7	1	4	8
2	8	1	5	9	4	3	7	6
4	3	7	8	6	1	2	9	5
7	1	2	9	8	3	5	6	4
9	5	8	6	4	2	7	3	1
6	4	3	1	7	5	8	2	9
3	7	5	4	1	6	9	8	2
1	9	4	2	3	8	6	5	7
8	2	6	7	5	9	4	1	3

Difficulty Level ★★
8-01

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Why do some young…

From page D8

calls for it") could be a trial balloon to see if enough fans approve.

If fans get sufficiently pumped up, producers could be ready to whip up sexy vehicles for the new Lolitas of the local slivered screen.

Even if those sexy productions do materialize, however, most of them will most likely opt for a less than "R-18" classification, so that they can play on SM Cineplex screens.

A few could turn up the heat and hope to be shown in other movie houses but they would have to be really hot hits to turn a profit on those fewer screens.

Agot Isidro

SINGER **Agot Isidro** has learned to love acting—on the stage musical "Zsa Zsa Saturnah," in the Cinemalaya movie "Tulad ng Dati," and on ABS-CBN's forthcoming action-fantasy series, "Rounin."

But that doesn't mean she has stopped singing. In her forthcoming CD, she sings bossa nova tunes, including her own versions of classics by **Sergio Mendes, Neil Sedaka** and **Astrud Gilberto**. The 12-track CD also features a duet with jazz champion **Mon David**.

'Quadrille'

ANG ARKO ng Pilipinas, a foundation that cares for abandoned mentally handicapped people, is holding a fundraising concert on Aug. 11 at the Francisco Santiago Hall of Equitable PCIBank.

The duo piano concert, titled "Quadrill," features **Raul Sunico, Della Besa, Mary Anne Armovit** and **Anamaria de Guzman**. Call 878-4359 or 840-7000, local 2630.

'Wolf Creek'

WRITER-PRODUCER-director **Greg Mclean** has based his film, "Wolf Creek," on true events and real-life serial killers who have terrified Australians and international onlookers alike. Set in the Australian outback, the film follows three young backpackers as they meet the mysterious **Mick Taylor**, who offers them food and a place to spend the night—and sadly, horribly, much more!

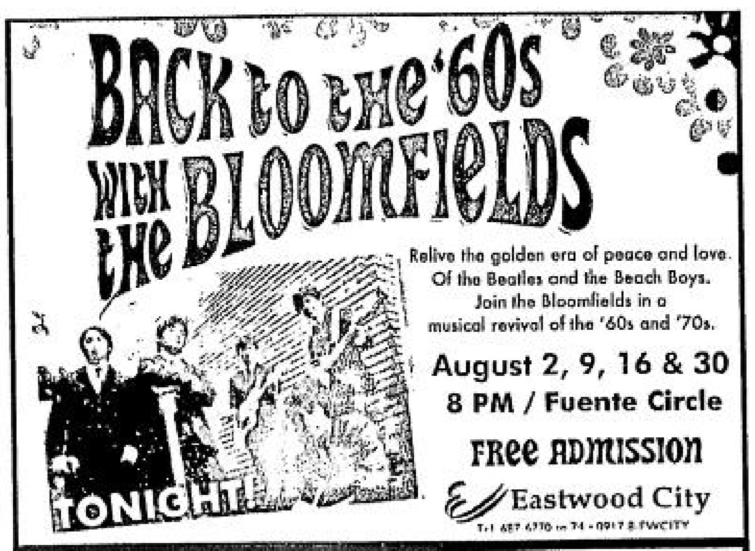
Feedback

FROM **Angela Cornejo** of Quezon City: "Please gather more boob tube booboos. My friends and I love reading them and having a good laugh at the many ways that people mangle not only English but also Pilipino on TV. And we learn from them, besides."

Art collection

THE ART collections of the Bank of the Philippine Islands and the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas will be exhibited in cooperation with the Metropolitan Museum of Manila to mark BPI's 155th anniversary. The exhibit opens today at the BSP Complex, Roxas Boulevard, Manila.

SHANG CINEPLEX
1 MIAMI VICE
MTRCB R-13
1:00, 4:00, 7:00, 10:00
2 ANT BULLY
MTRCB GP
1:00, 3:15, 5:30, 7:45, 10:00
3 SUKOB
MTRCB PG-13
12:20, 2:40, 5:00, 7:20, 9:40
4 WOLF CREEK
MTRCB R-18
PREMIERE THEATRE
THE BREAK UP
12:00, 2:30, 5:00, 7:30, 10:00
MTRCB R-18
Movies and schedules are subject to change without prior notice
Catch the Cineplex Special
A Blockbuster Gift for All Season
The Shang Cineplex Gift Certificates
Cinema Treats for Cinema 1,2,3 and 4
Premiere Rewards for Premiere Theatre
Call 633-7851, loc. 171 or 633-2227 for more details.
Shangri-La Plaza


BACK to the '60s with the BLOOMFIELDS
TONIGHT
Relive the golden era of peace and love.
Of the Beatles and the Beach Boys.
Join the Bloomfields in a musical revival of the '60s and '70s.
August 2, 9, 16 & 30
8 PM / Fuente Circle
FREE ADMISSION
Eastwood City

GREENHILLS CINEMAS
GREENHILLS SHOPPING CENTER, ORTIGAS AVENUE, GREENHILLS, SAN JUAN, METRO MANILA
THEATRE MALL
GREENHILLS
a landmark reinvented!
NOW SHOWING
CINEMA 1 SUKOB PG-13
CINEMA 2 WOLF CREEK R-18
PROMENADE
GREENHILLS
...a dinotertainment for all!
NOW SHOWING
CINEMA 3 MIAMI VICE R13
CINEMA 4 MIAMI VICE R13
CINEMA 5 ANT BULLY GP
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MUSIC MUSEUM
TEATRINO
PROMENADE GREENHILLS
AUG. 4, 2006 | GLADYS GUEVARRA | 9:00PM
AUG. 11, 2006 | Simply SITTI | 9:00PM
EVERY MONDAY | DANCE NIGHT | 7:00PM
EVERY WEDNESDAY | CERRUDO .. CLASSICO | 8:00PM
AUG. 24, 2006 | DAVID POMERANZ | 9:00PM
FOR INQUIRIES PLS CALL 722-4532 LOC 116
FOR INQUIRIES & RESERVATION, PLS. CALL 721-6726 OR 721-0635

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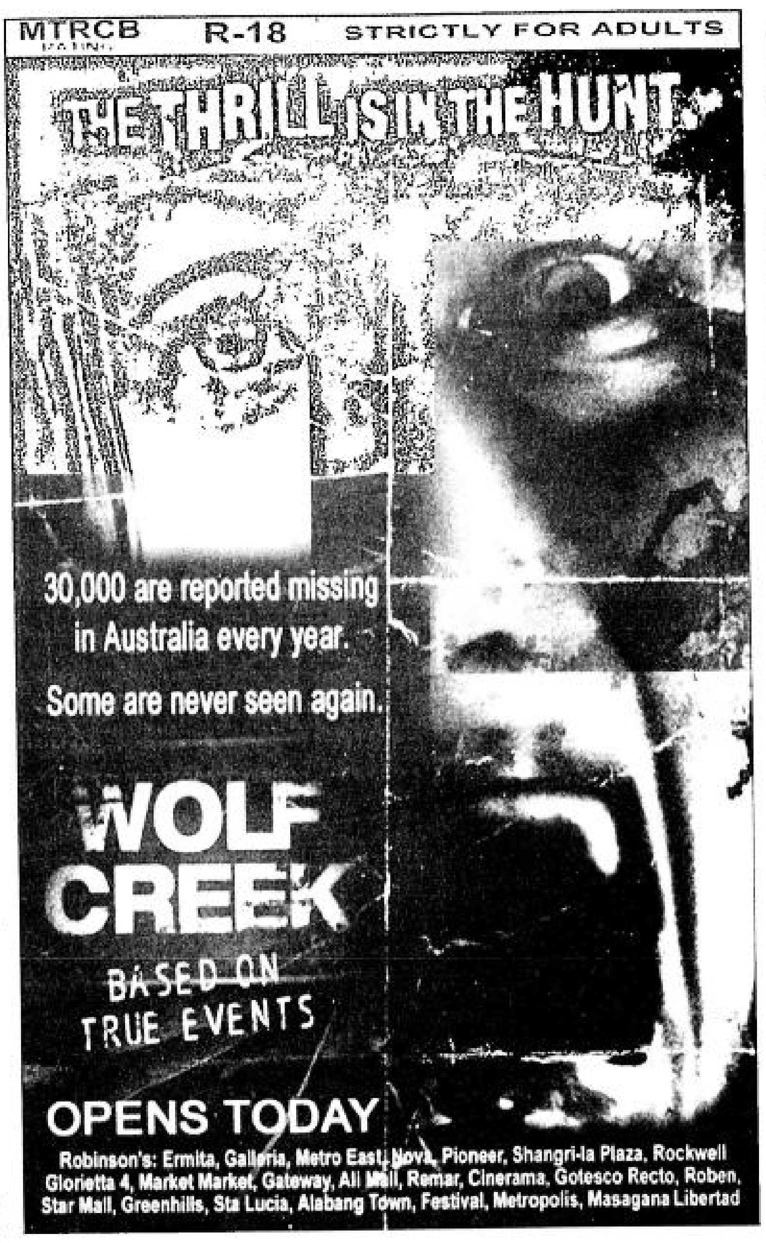
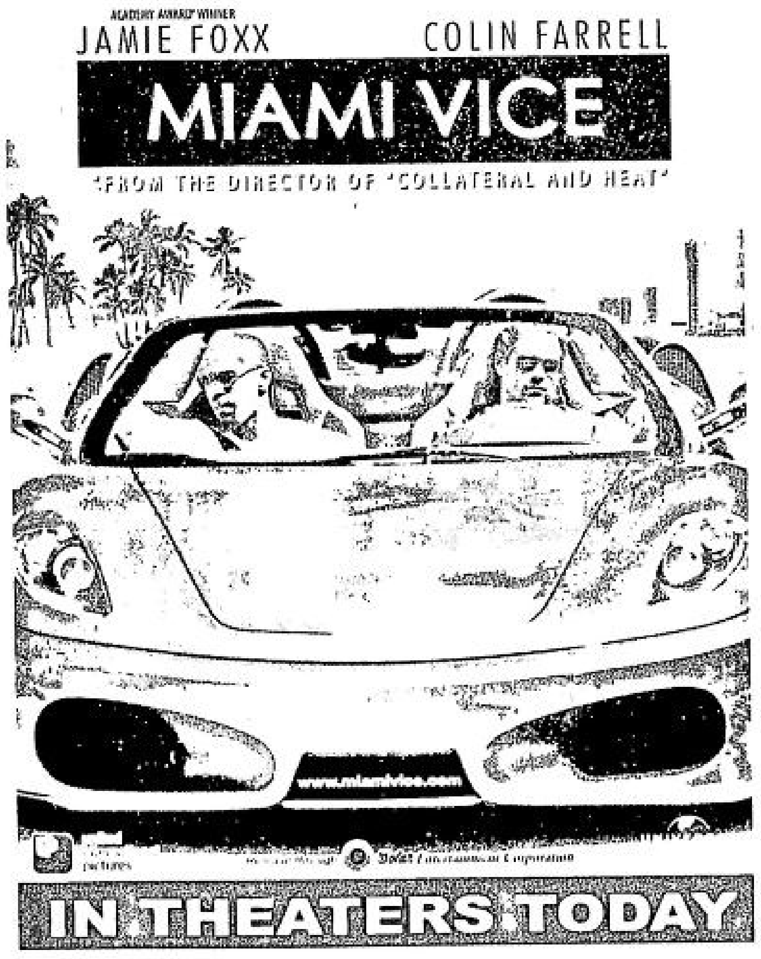
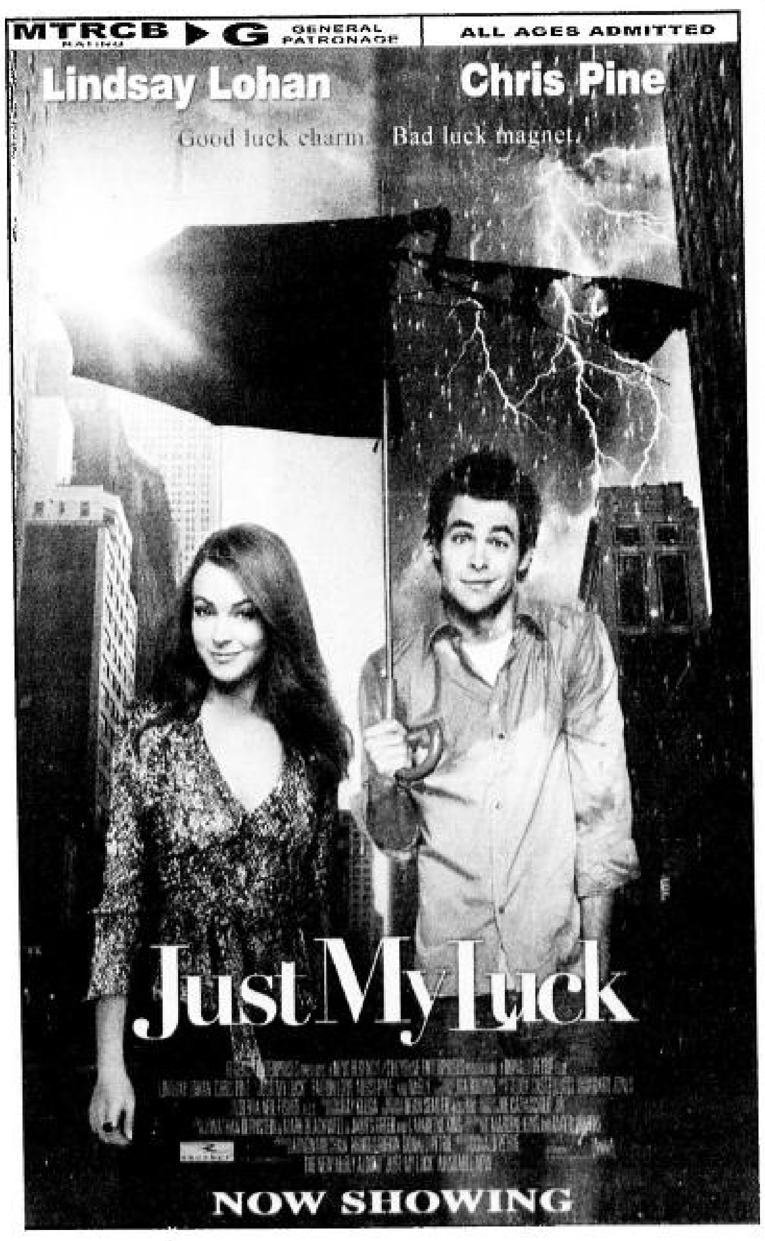
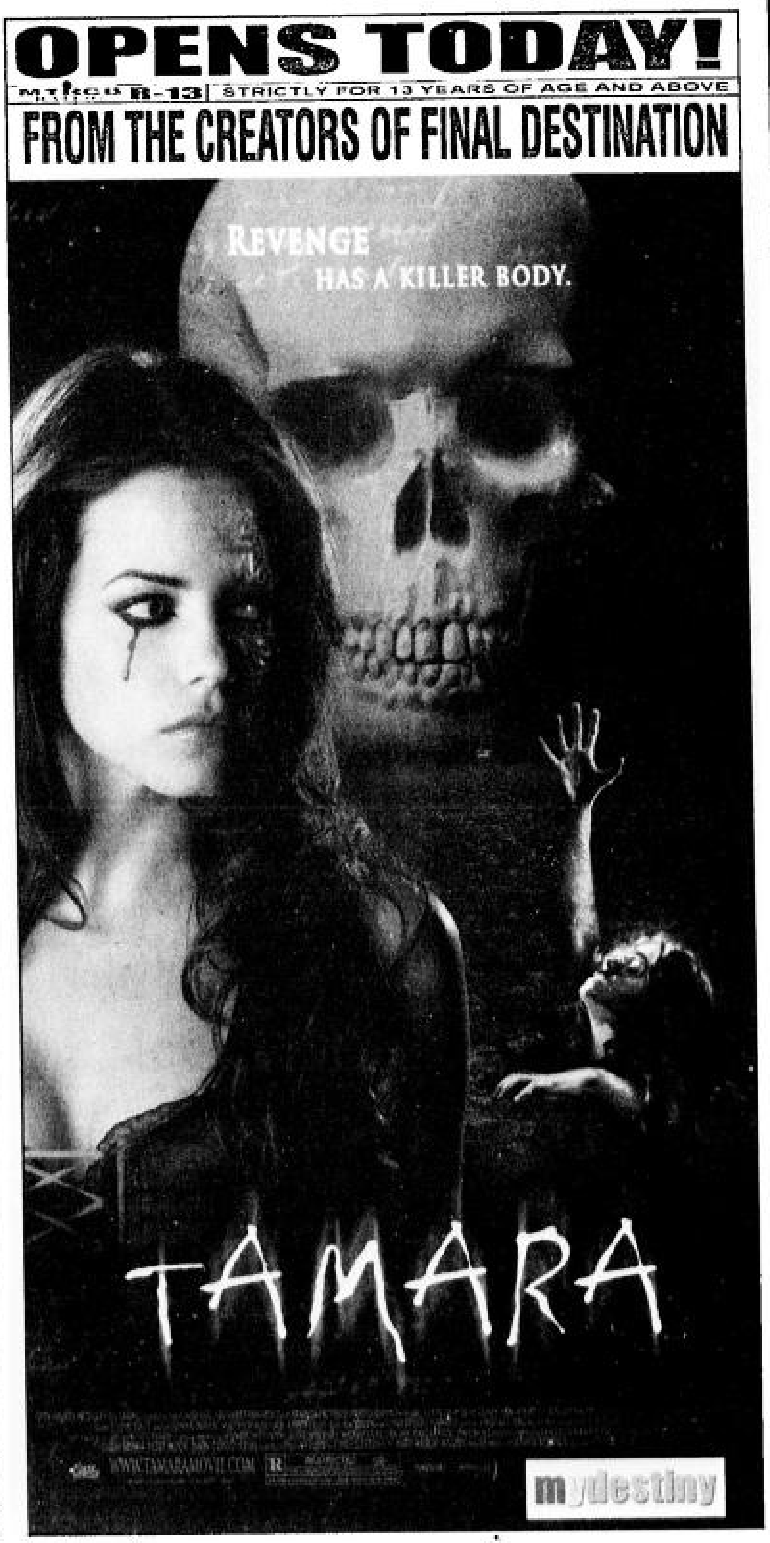
DOLBY DIGITAL SURROUND-EX
Eastwood City Walk 2, Eastwood City
E. Rodriguez Jr. Ave. (C-5) Quezon City
For inquiries, call:
687-6963
GUARANTEED SEATS
MOVIES ARE SUBJECT TO CHANGE WITHOUT PRIOR NOTICE
1 SUKOB
11:35, 2:05, 4:35, 7:05, 10:00
PG-13
2 MIAMI VICE
11:20, 2:20, 5:20, 11:10
R-13
3 THE ANT BULLY
11:40, 1:55, 4:10, 6:25, 8:40, 10:55
GP
4 THE BREAK-UP
1:05, 3:35, 6:05, 8:35, 11:00
R-13


MTRCB RATING R-18 STRICTLY FOR ADULTS
THE THRILL IS IN THE HUNT
30,000 are reported missing in Australia every year.
Some are never seen again.
WOLF CREEK
BASED ON TRUE EVENTS
OPENS TODAY
Robinson's: Ermita, Galleria, Metro East, Nova, Pioneer, Shangri-la Plaza, Rockwell
Glorietta 4, Market Market, Gateway, Ali Mall, Remar, Cinerama, Gotesco Recto, Roben,
Star Mall, Greenhills, Sta Lucia, Alabang Town, Festival, Metropolis, Masagana Libertad


ACADEMY AWARD WINNER
JAMIE FOXX
COLIN FARRELL
MIAMI VICE
FROM THE DIRECTOR OF "COLLATERAL AND HEAT"
www.miamivice.com
IN THEATERS TODAY


MTRCB RATING G GENERAL PATRONAGE
ALL AGES ADMITTED
Lindsay Lohan
Chris Pine
Good luck charm. Bad luck magnet.
Just My Luck
NOW SHOWING


OPENS TODAY!
MTRCB R-13 STRICTLY FOR 13 YEARS OF AGE AND ABOVE
FROM THE CREATORS OF FINAL DESTINATION
REVENGE HAS A KILLER BODY.
TAMARA
WWW.TAMARAMOVIE.COM
mydestiny

MMTA
METRO MANILA THEATERS ASSOCIATION
MOVIE GUIDE
NOW SHOWING

SHANG CINEPLEX
6th floor Shangri-la Plaza EDSA corner Shaw Boulevard, Mandaluyong City
1 MIAMI VICE
2 ANT BULLY
3 SUKOB
4 WOLF CREEK
PREMIERE
THE BREAK-UP

CINEMA 2000
Cinema 2000 Waltermart Makati
Waltermart Center, Chino Roces Ave. cor. Antonio Arnaiz Pio del Pilar, Makati City
Tel 816.4214 / 816.4216
1 CLICK (SNEAK PREVIEW)
2 THE BREAK UP
3 SUKOB
4 JUST MY LUCK

starmall
EDSA-SHAW
(Mandaluyong) tel. 7266150
3 SUKOB
4 PIRATES OF THE CARIBBEAN-2
5 CLICK (SNEAK PREVIEW)

metropolis star cinema
www.clickthecity.com.ph
(ALABANG) tel. 8504285, 5433934
1 CLICK (SNEAK PREVIEW)
2 SUPERMAN RETURNS
3 PIRATES OF THE CARIBBEAN-2
4 SUKOB

THEATRES
PIRATES OF THE CARIBBEAN-2
2 SUKOB
3 WHITE LADY

PACIFIC MALL LUCENA CINEMAGIC
Pacific Mall Lucena Tel (042) 660-5371
1 PIRATES OF THE CARIBBEAN-2
2 SUKOB
3 RESERVED
4 RESERVED

Filinvest
FESTIVAL CINEMA
(Muntinlupa) tel 850.3571 or 72
1 SUKOB
2 CLICK (SNEAK PREVIEW)
3 SUPERMAN RETURNS
4 JUST MY LUCK
5 THE BREAK UP
6 PIRATES OF THE CARIBBEAN-2
7 SUKOB
8 LADY IN THE WATER
9 NACHO LIBRE
10 WHITE LADY

Blue Wave
MARIKINA
Sumulong Highway cor. Mayor Gil Fernando Street, Sto. Niño, Marikina City tel. 9341927
1 (DOLBY) SUKOB
2 (DOLBY) JUST MY LUCK
3 PIRATES OF THE CARIBBEAN - 2
4 (DOLBY) RESERVED

SUPER CINERAMA
Isetann Cinerama Complex Recto
tel 7334228
1 JUST MY LUCK
2 PIRATES OF THE CARIBBEAN - 2
3 SUKOB
4 WHITE LADY
5 CLICK (SNEAK PREVIEW)

MARKETPLACE
Mandaluyong
tel 533.3851 / 533.3856
1 LADY IN THE WATER
2 SUKOB
3 THE FAST & THE FURIOUS-3
4 RESERVED

Masagana CINEMA
(Pasay) tel 833.3290 / 833.3274
1 SUKOB
2 PIRATES OF THE CARIBBEAN - 2
3 CLICK (SNEAK PREVIEW)

Center Mall Cinema
Baguio Center Mall, Magsaysay Avenue (Baguio City) tel (074) - (4449346)
1 PIRATES OF THE CARIBBEAN - 2
2 SUBMERGED

Jade Cinema
(Angeles City) tel (045) 887.5001 to 03
1 I WHITE LADY
2 SUKOB
3 NACHO LIBRE
4 CLICK (SNEAK PREVIEW)

Centre Plaza Cinema
(Balanga, Bataan) tel (047) 237.7007
1 PIRATES OF THE CARIBBEAN - 2
2 WHITE LADY

EASTWOOD CINEMAS
(Eastwood City Walk 2, Eastwood City E. Rodriguez Jr. Ave (C-5) Quezon City)
tel 687.6963 or 72
1 SUKOB
2 MIAMI VICE
3 THE ANT BULLY
4 THE BREAK-UP

CINEMA 2000
Movie Theatres of the New Millenium

Cinema 2000 Waltermart
(Calamba) tel (049) 545.7383
1 CLICK (SNEAK PREVIEW)
2 SUKOB
3 PIRATES OF THE CARIBBEAN - 2
4 RESERVED

Cinema 2000 Pavilion Mall
(Biñan) tel. (049) 4111146
1 WHITE LADY
2 THE INSIDE MAN
3 SUKOB
4 PIRATES OF THE CARIBBEAN - 2

Cinema 2000 Cinemagix
(Urdaneta) tel(075) 568.6771
1 WHITE LADY
2 SUKOB
3 PIRATES OF THE CARIBBEAN - 2

Cinema 2000 Metrotown
(Tarlac) tel (045) 982.1729
1 WHITE LADY
2 SUKOB
3 PIRATES OF THE CARIBBEAN - 2
4 R. V. RUNAWAY VACATION

Cinema 2000 Waltermart
(Plaridel) tel (044) 795.3320
1 PIRATES OF THE CARIBBEAN - 2
2 WHITE LADY
3 SUKOB

Cinema 2000 Waltermart
(Gapan) tel. (044) 4867736
1 PIRATES OF THE CARIBBEAN - 2
2 WHITE LADY

Lianas Cinema
(Pasig) tel 640.4748
1 LADY IN THE WATER
2 SUPERMAN RETURNS

Lianas Cinema
(Alabang) tel 850.1276
1 LADY IN THE WATER
2 SALAT
3 MAPUPULANG LABI
4 THE FAST & THE FURIOUS-3

Lianas MovieCity
(Calamba) tel (049) 545.7202
1 SUKOB
2 BIGLANG LIKO
3 CLICK (SNEAK PREVIEW)
4 SUBMERGED
5 PIRATES OF THE CARIBBEAN-2

Fiesta World Mall
(Lipa) tel (043) 981.0790
1 SEE NO EVIL
2 SUKOB
3 TAKE THE LEAD
4 THE FAST & THE FURIOUS-3

Berma Cinema
(Baclaran) tel 879.2030 / 879.2029
1 PERLAS
2 THE FAST & THE FURIOUS-3

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Why do some young stars go sexy?

VIEWFINDER

Nestor U. Torre

EVER SINCE THE SM THEATER CIRCUIT stopped showing "For Adults Only" movies, the production of sexy films has taken a nosedive.

SM cineplexes account for a substantial percentage of local screens. Most producers feel they need these to give their movies enough exposure to turn a profit.

Other factors contributing to the decline in the production of sexy movies include the public's increasing disdain for sleazes and quickies, and currently stricter enforcement of MTRCB standards.

So, few sexy mainstream films are being produced, to the relief of those who believe that, in the past, most local sex flicks were exploitative, and demeaned both performers and viewers.

This is why we were perplexed to learn that some "sweet" young actresses were changing career paths and opting for a decidedly more sexy image.

Why? The reason is a no-brainer: to generate heat and excitement in their bland careers. But, why now?

There could be method to this disconnect. First, we observe that, to date, most of the sexiness that these new nymphets have exhibited has been off-screen, in sexy magazine pictorials and underwear ramp shows.

So, the move could just be a safe way to heat up starlets' image in general, without really requiring them to strip for the screen.

This "theoretical" heating up could work wonders by generating renewed public interest in heretofore safely pigeonholed performers. Even if no sexy movies are forthcoming, renewed interest and an edgier image are plus points devoutly to be wished for by struggling starlets.

On the other hand, the starlets' announcement that they're turning sexy ("if the role

WHY/ D7

... speaking of whom, Sandara Park is Uno Magazine's "surprise of the year," according to the publishers (among them actor Diether Ocampo). Park, who appears on the cover, says that, "for the record," she's already 21 years old.

OPENING TODAY

Cavite

Stars Ian Gamazon, Dominique Gonzales, Jeffrey Lagda
Directed by Ian Gamazon and Neill Dela Llana

A Filipino-American (Gamazon) returns to Cavite for his father's funeral, only to be told that his mother and sister have been kidnapped by the Abu Sayyaf. Stranded in a country he barely knows, the *balikbayan* is then instructed by the bandits that the only way he can save his relatives is by "committing a horrendous act." Made for under $7,000, this film won the "Somebody to Watch" honor at the last Independent Spirit Awards. Tom Keogh of The Seattle Times raves that it "resonates hauntingly with our dangerous times... Truly on-the-fly filmmaking, nearly all the suspense is generated by the voice of an invisible enemy." Ruthe Stein of the San Francisco Chronicle enthuses: "This is by no means a polished film. But it has an energy lacking in thrillers that cost hundreds times more to make... a calling card from gifted and resourceful filmmakers." Says Stephen Holden of The New York Times: "Terrorism and cultural identity are only two of the themes wound into a tight knot of fear and bewilderment." Exclusively at SM Digital Theaters.

Wolf Creek

Stars John Jarratt, Nathan Phillips, Cassandra Magrath, Kestie Morassi
Directed by Greg Mclean

Based on the crimes of real-life Australian serial killers, this screamfest, according to the director, is "intended to be an unforgettable, shocking... ultra-realistic, semi-documentary scary movie." Three young backpackers are marooned in the outback and tortured by a deranged truck driver. Dennis Harvey of Variety describes it as "harrowing and unpleasant... [an] impressive [debut] for the writer-director-producer [who] pushed it to the brink of punishment." Owen Gleiberman of Entertainment Weekly calls it "unusually crisp and boldly shot." Kevin Crust of the Los Angeles Times comments that it's "an initially promising horror film that turns exploitive... [and] fails to deliver the requisite payoff."

WOLF CREEK

The Ant Bully

With the voices of Meryl Streep, Julia Roberts, Nicolas Cage, Lily Tomlin
Directed by John A. Davis

Kafka for the kiddie set. The children's book by John Nickle is turned into a big-screen parable by the director of "Jimmy Neutron: Boy Genius." A bored 10-year-old boy, who torments ant colonies with a squirt gun, gets his just desserts and is shrunk to insect size. He then learns a lesson on teamwork and compassion while laboring in the colony and fighting wasps. Robert Wilonsky of the Village Voice commends the film: "It's no Happy Meal infomercial, no impulse-item huckster... it exists in a world of its own." Michael Rechtshaffen of The Hollywood Reporter thinks it's a "garden-variety animated bug picture... [it] feels anonymously generic and charmlessly mechanical [in spite of] the stellar voice cast and Tom Hanks' stamp of approval [as producer]."

MIAMI VICE

Miami Vice

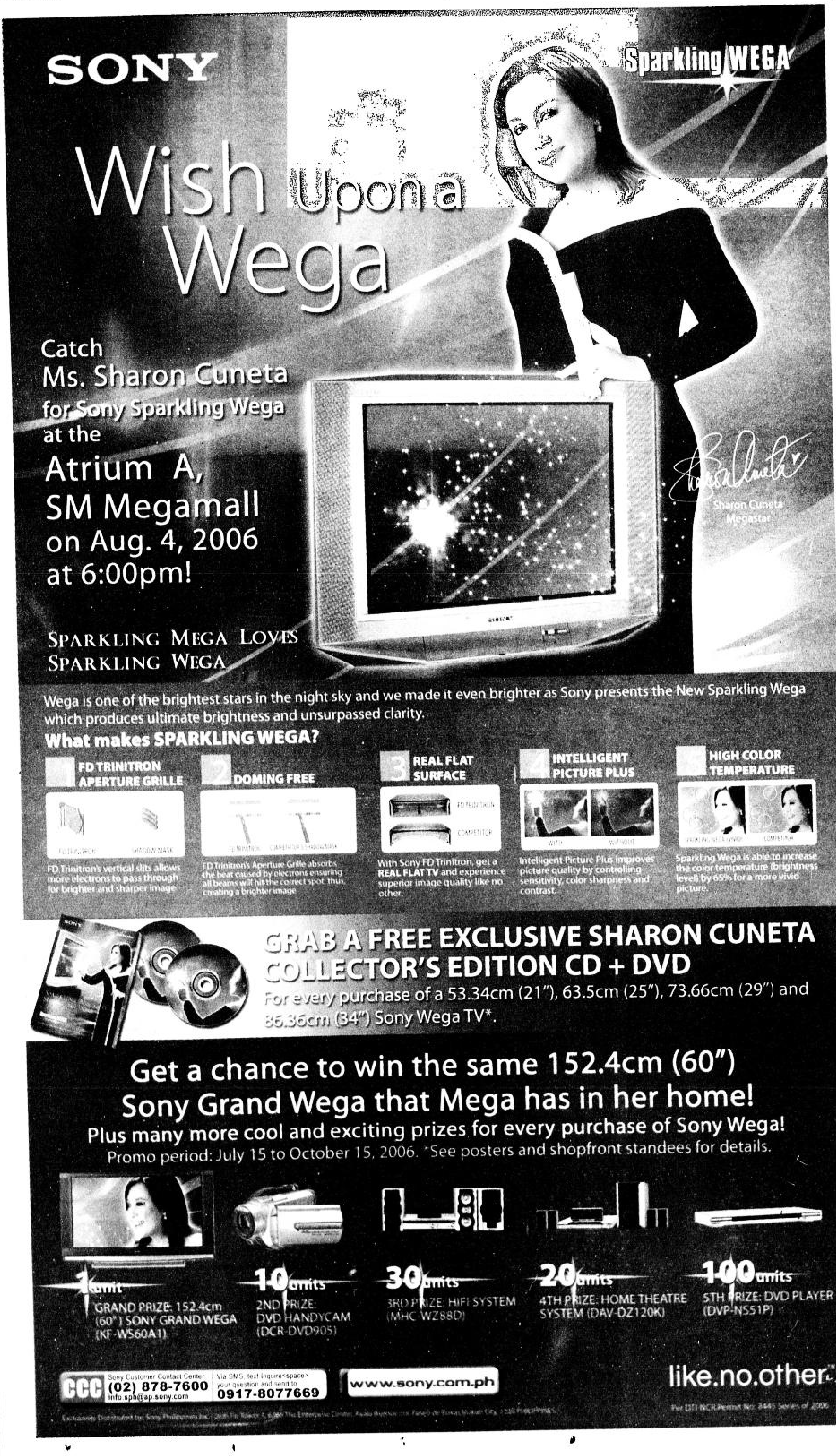
Stars Colin Farrell, Jamie Foxx, Gong Li
Directed by Michael Mann

The auteur ("The Insider," "Ali," "Heat") known for "stylish, hard-bitten cinema" casts Farrell and Foxx in the TV roles made iconic by Don Johnson and Philip Michael Thomas in the hip cops series which ran on NBC from 1984 to 1989. David Ansen of Newsweek lauds it as a "straight-ahead genre movie... filled with the director's signature macho verisimilitude... [it] delivers the thrills, atmosphere and romance it promises, but it doesn't resonate like major Mann." David Denby of the New Yorker says it "achieves a screw-you willfulness, a sense of reckless freedom. That's the essence of crime and makes up for a lot of narrative confusion and chewed-off gibberish." Jeremiah Kipp of Slant magazine rants: "The two-hour-plus running time is a massive amount of time to be hanging around with non-developed characters."

Tamara

Stars Jenna Dewan, Matthew Marsden, Katie Stuart, Chad Faust
Directed by Jeremy Haft

"Carrie" crossed with "Clueless." A prank on a gawky campus wallflower goes awry and she gets "squashed." In her grave, the victim undergoes a makeover and returns as a seductress who stalks and exacts vengeance on the bullies responsible for her death. Nathan Lee of The New York Times dismisses it as "a low-budget horror film with even lower ambitions... a movie of few innovations, but one genuine, if unintentional, surprise." Elizabeth Weitzman of the New York Daily News calls it a "mediocre little thriller that might have promised cheap fun." Mark Olsen of the LA Weekly thinks "the filmmakers try gamely to put a unique spin on a familiar material, but eventually fall back on by-the-numbers tropes... [In spite of its] female empowerment [ambitions, it] devolves into a finale consisting of yet another lame chase."



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